Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Development

11 July 2024

General Biosecurity Direction

Shellfish wet storage systems biosecurity requirements

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has implemented a General Biosecurity Direction to all operators of shellfish wet storage systems to manage biosecurity risks and protect NSW waterways.

Wet storage systems

Shellfish wet storage involves the temporary post-harvest storage of shellfish in containers or floats placed in tanks containing natural or synthetic seawater. It is a method used to extend the shelf life of shellfish and growers can use these systems to work around harvest area closures caused by weather events or poor water quality.

Wet storage of shellfish, including oysters and mussels, presents unique and significant food safety and biosecurity risks. These risks must be carefully considered during the installation and implementation of wet storage systems. Proper construction, operation, and maintenance of wet storage systems are crucial for ensuring safe and responsible shellfish.

To address biosecurity risks, the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has implemented a General Biosecurity Direction for operators of wet storage systems. These measures aim to reduce risks to an acceptable level of protection, safeguarding both shellfish and our waterways.

Figure 1: Example of a manufactured wet storage system

A copy of the General Biosecurity Direction can be found on the DPIRD website:
https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dpird/our-agencies/agriculture-and-biosecurity

NSW Food Authority also has requirements in place to manage food safety risks associated with shellfish wet storage. Operators can find details on the Food Authority website:
https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/

Two classes of system based on risk

Management measures have been built on a risk-based approach to capture different classes of systems based on the intended use of the system and therefore the risk posed.

The source of shellfish stocked, or intended to stock, in the wet storage facility will inform what measures need to be implemented in system design as follows:

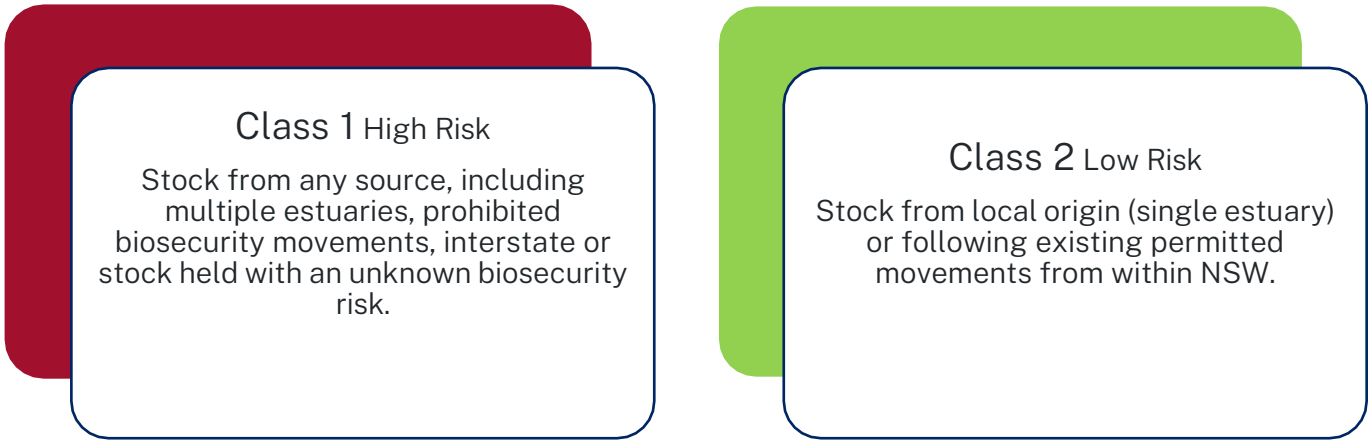

Figure 2: Wet storage system biosecurity classifications based on intended source of shellfish stock.

For more information on biosecurity movement controls in place to manage the risk of spreading the oyster diseases QX and Pacific oyster mortality syndrome (POMS), please see the DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity website: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/bfs/aquatic-biosecurity/aquaculture/oysters/oyster-biosecurity-requirements

Biosecurity Requirements

All systems

- All systems must have the ability to isolate influent and effluent waters in the event of a system failure or stock issue.
- No co-mingling of batches to occur. Each batch deployed to the system must be held in individual partitions, baskets or containers and traceability must be maintained as per the NSW Food Authority Wet Storage Requirements.
- Written records of batches held must be kept for 12 months including the type and quantity of stock, and the date in and out of the system.
- Unexplained mortality of stock in systems must be reported to NSW DPI (via EAD Hotline 1800 675 888; aquatic.biosecurity@dpird.nsw.gov.au or by contacting a local Fisheries Officer or Authorised Officer).

Note: all facilities are subject to random compliance inspections by an authorised officer at any time under the *Biosecurity Act 2015.*

Additional measures based on class

CLASS 1 (High)	CLASS 2 (Low)
1. Located in a dedicated, lockable, land-based, enclosed production area, ensuring that no unauthorised personnel can access the system. 2. Dedicated or suitably decontaminated equipment to be used in association with each system. 3. Personnel and facility hygiene required: 'biosecurity area' signage at entrance, footbaths at entry/exit points (or 'shed boots'), personnel PPE (gloves and sanitiser). 4. Untreated wastewater must not be discharged to NSW waters, come into contact with any stock or equipment in the production area. 5. Waste waters must be either discharged to the sewerage or wastewater system for the local area, or directly transported to a sewerage of wastewater treatment facility, or held in an wastewater tank and treated prior to release from the facility, by: a. Removing all organic waste and disposing to landfill, followed by b. Treatment with chlorine at a minimum rate of either: i. 200ppm available chlorine for 2 hours; or ii. 30ppm available chlorine for 24hrs, followed by c. Neutralisation of chlorine prior to discharge, via either: i. Application of sodium thiosulfate, or ii. Vigorous aeration for 24 hours. You must obtain appropriate approvals before discharging wastewater. 6. Stock is not permitted to be returned/deployed to any NSW waters.	1. Where located outside of an enclosed production area, the system must be covered by suitable lids. 2. Where a Class 2 system is to be held in a facility with Class 1 system, it must be isolated from the Class 1 system in a separate room, with separate water flows for each system and use dedicated or suitably decontaminated equipment. 3. Where stock is to be obtained from another estuary, a completed copy of the oyster shipment logbook must be completed and submitted to NSW DPI no less than 48 hours and no more than 2 weeks prior to movement into the system. 4. If not sold to market, shellfish may be returned to the estuary of origin, or any estuary permitted by existing shellfish shipment and biosecurity regulations. 5. No waste water discharge requirement.

Both Class 1 and Class 2 facilities in same production area

1. Where a Class 2 system is to be held in a facility with Class 1 system, it must be housed in a separate room to the Class 1 system, with clear signage indicating the two different classes of systems and providing contact details for the person in charge.
2. There must be separate water flows for each system and use dedicated equipment or suitably decontaminated equipment for each facility.
3. Hand sanitiser must be provided at entrances and be used between facilities.

Biosecurity signage

Signage where a Class 1 wet storage facility is operated must include words to the effect of:

You are now entering a [Class 1/Class 2] facility production area. A general biosecurity direction made under the Biosecurity Act 2015 is in force. Contact the person in charge before entry to find out how the general biosecurity direction applies to a [Class 1/Class 2] facility.

The sign must also provide contact details for the person in charge.

Note: if both Class 1 and 2 systems are operated, the signage must be applied to both facilities to ensure no confusion as to which class of system is housed in which facility.

Application process

Operators of wet storage systems are required to apply for a wet storage licence through the NSW Food Authority. To negate the need for a separate application process, additional biosecurity questions will be asked to determine if the system is able to operate as a Class 1 or Class 2 system. Class 1 systems will be inspected by an Authorised Officer under the *Biosecurity Act 2015.*

Businesses are encouraged to contact the NSW Food Authority Shellfish Program at food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au or (02) 6552 3000 (option 2) prior to purchase or constructing a wet storage system. It is often easier and financially beneficial to discuss options at this design stage to make allowances and modifications to wet storage system design which will likely meet regulations than it is to purchase or construct a system that may not meet requirements.

Once a business is satisfied the system design meets intended purpose the business can apply for a Seafood Business Licence to cover the operation of a wet storage system. Operation of shellfish wet storage systems without a formal licence is prohibited in NSW.