



Washington State Commercial Shellfish Industry Best Management Practices During Vibrio Season

Temperature is the main thing to consider during Vibrio season.

Remember:

- At 50° F Vibrio stops growing.
- At 65° F Vibrio can double in less than 5 hours.
- At 80° F Vibrio can double in just over 1.5 hours.

Monitor all temperatures during Vibrio season: ambient air, water, shellstock. If any of these is high enough to create a health risk, consider not harvesting until temperatures subside.

Harvest as soon as possible with the outgoing tide.

Get shellstock under temperature control right away, and cool to 50° F as quickly as possible.

- Have ice available at the harvest site, or
- Rinse shellstock with cold water to expedite cooling if ice is not immediately available.

Vibrio levels drop during weeks with early morning low-tides and increase during weeks with mid-day low tides.

- Plan harvests ahead of time and consider the tidal cycle.
- During the weeks of low mid-day tides.
 - Don't harvest at all, or
 - Harvest ahead and wet store/resubmerge product in deep cool water, or
 - Plan to harvest in the late night or early morning hours if hot weather is forecast.

If you must harvest in sunny weather, shade product and get it under temperature control as quickly as possible. Wet burlap is an inexpensive and easy way to create shade.

Why following these Vibrio Best Management Practices is a good idea:

- Historically the majority of illnesses occur from product harvested in July and August when air and water temperatures are at their highest. Bend this trend by avoiding harvest when water and air temperatures are high.
- Preventing illnesses by proactively modifying harvest dates based on the weather may mean less harvest in July and August. **But...** fewer July and August illnesses may mean fewer areas closed through August (coastal) or September (inland).

If you have questions about Vibrio control, please contact your inspector or call our office at 360-236-3330.