

## EXCERPTS FROM THE FWP DRAFT FISH HEALTH POLICY

### TRANSFER OF LIVE FISH

#### Into State Fish Hatcheries

It is the policy of FWP to NOT move live fish from the wild or from another hatchery onto a FWP hatchery. Live fish may be considered for movement onto a FWP hatchery only for emergency situations and only after review by the Fish Health Committee and approval by the FWP Hatchery Bureau Chief. The following situations may be considered emergency situations.

1. Planned or unplanned disruption of water supply at a state hatchery, which requires removal of fish.
2. Construction at a state hatchery which requires removal of fish in order to complete construction work.
3. Other situations which are considered an emergency by the Fish Health Committee or the FWP Hatchery Bureau Chief.

**Eggs:** Eggs may be shipped from one hatchery to another **ONLY** after laboratory testing of the broodstock from which eggs were collected is completed and no pathogens found.

#### Wild Fish Transfers

No wild salmonid fish may be collected or transported by the general public, except as allowed by Montana fishing regulations.

Wild salmonid fish may be transported by FWP in accordance with the FWP wild fish stocking policy (Appendix 3).

No wild salmonid fish may be transported from one body of water in Montana to another body of water in Montana until the proposed transfer has been reviewed as prescribed in the wild fish transfer policy. This review shall include a review of the fish health status of the fish proposed for movement.

The FWP Fish Health Committee will evaluate each proposed wild fish transfer on a case-by-case basis, and consideration will be given to unique populations of wild fish, especially when limited numbers of fish are present in the population. Transfers of wild fish often involve collecting fish from limited population size and/or fish which are, for a variety of reasons, considered too important or valuable to kill the required number for health testing purposes. These cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions will be considered by the FWP Fish Health Committee. Exceptions may be granted based on health

testing results of other salmonid fish from the same body of water, past health history, importance of the stock, and other considerations. The fish health committee shall decide whether or not to grant an exemption. The decision of the committee shall result in a recommendation which shall be submitted to the FWP Fisheries Division Administrator for approval.

Prior to moving fish under the wild fish transfer policy, the following minimum health testing must be conducted:

**A. Live Salmonid Fish**

Fish must be inspected for Class A and B pathogens. It is recommended that testing be conducted at the 5% level as described in BLUEBOOK whenever possible. However, since it will not always be possible to test fish at the 5% level, fewer fish may be considered by the FWP Fish Health Committee. Fish selected for this testing may include the species of fish proposed to be transferred or other salmonid fish present in the water fish will be collected from. Health history of the water the fish will be stocked into will also be considered.

**B. Live Salmonid Eggs**

When eggs are collected from the wild, the brood source shall be tested at the BLUEBOOK 5% level or 100% of the fish contributing to the egg take. In addition, ovarian fluid shall be collected from either 100% of contributing females or 150 adult females shall be tested. If ovarian fluid is not available from 150 females, seminal fluid from males may be used to supplement the sample. Since it is not always possible to test all fish contributing to the egg take or to sacrifice parent stock, testing of other salmonids in the same water and non-lethal sampling of adults may be considered. Non-lethal sampling may consist of ovarian and seminal fluid testing for virus and ovarian fluid testing for *R. salmoninarum*.

**DISINFECTION PROCEDURES**

To avoid the introduction or spread of pathogens disinfection procedures should be followed. Iodophors, such as Betadine, Western Chemical P.V.P. or Argentine, are commonly used as disinfectants for eggs and equipment.

**A. Egg Disinfection**

Disinfection is necessary to control the spread of pathogens carried in, or on the surface of, eggs. Gametes should not be collected from clinically diseased fish. Eggs should be disinfected during water hardening and upon arrival at the incubation facility, prior to exposure to running water at the receiving facility.

For water hardening, the general procedure is to water harden eggs in water containing 75 mg/l iodine for a minimum of 30 minutes. The concentration and time may vary depending upon experience with a particular species of fish. NOTE: Iodine can be lethal to grayling eggs. It is not recommended to water harden grayling eggs in iodophor. It is the policy of Montana FWP to water harden eggs collected from wild spawning populations of salmonid fish, except grayling, in iodophor. Iodophor water hardening should be conducted on eggs collected from hatchery-held broodstock, when possible. This procedure is recommended for non-salmonid eggs, but not required. A small batch of eggs should be tested before subjecting large lots of eggs to iodophor.

Iodophor surface disinfection of all fish eggs is required before eggs may be placed into water at any state fish hatchery. All eggs must be disinfected before they are allowed to come in contact with hatchery water, rearing units, or equipment. Water in which eggs were shipped must be contained, disinfected with chlorine (5000 ppm) for 15 minutes and disposed of into a system that does not enter any surface water.

Surface disinfection of eggs is achieved through iodophor disinfection using 100 mg/l iodophor for 10 minutes. Water below 100 mg/l total alkalinity should be buffered by adding sodium bicarbonate (0.01%). The iodophor solution should be changed between lots of eggs or when the color begins to lighten. NOTE: It may be necessary to rehydrate eggs prior to adding iodophor. This may be required if eggs had been shipped dry and shipping time was prolonged. In order to rehydrate eggs, they should be placed into a water bath for 30-60 minutes before exposing them to iodophor.

When shipping eyed eggs between hatcheries, it is recommended that eggs be iodophor disinfected before shipping and upon arrival at the receiving facility.