

§ 216.155 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.

(a) The holder of the Letter of Authorization is required to cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and any other Federal, state or local agency monitoring the impacts of the activity on marine mammals. The holder must notify the Director, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, suite 4200, Long Beach, CA (Telephone: (310) 980-4001), at least 2 weeks prior to activities involving the detonation of explosives in order to satisfy paragraph (f) of this section.

(b) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must designate a qualified on-site individual(s) to record the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammals that inhabit the Outer Sea Test Range.

(c) The primary test area, and if necessary, secondary and tertiary test areas, in the Outer Sea Test Range, must be surveyed by marine mammal biologists and other trained individuals, and the marine mammal populations monitored, approximately 48 hours prior to a scheduled detonation, on the day of detonation, and for a period of time specified in the Letter of Authorization after each test or project. Monitoring shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, aerial surveillance sufficient to ensure that no marine mammals are within the designated safety zone nor are likely to enter the designated safety zone prior to or at the time of detonation.

(d)(1) Under the direction of a certified marine mammal veterinarian, examination and recovery of any dead or injured marine mammals will be conducted. Necropsies will be performed and tissue samples taken from any dead animals. After completion of the necropsy, animals not retained for shoreside examination, will be tagged and returned to the sea. The occurrence of live marine mammals will also be documented.

(2) Activities related to the monitoring described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section or the Letter of Authorization issued under this part may include the retention of marine mammals without the need for a separate scientific research permit. The use of such marine

mammals in other scientific research may be authorized pursuant to 50 CFR parts 216 and 220.

(e) At its discretion, the National Marine Fisheries Service may place an observer on either the towing vessel, target vessel, or both, and on any ship or aircraft involved in marine mammal reconnaissance, or monitoring either prior to, during, or after explosives detonation in order to monitor the impact on marine mammals.

(f) A summary report must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, within 90 days after the conclusion of any explosives detonation project. This report must include the following information:

(1) Date and time of the test(s);

(2) A summary of the pre-test and post-test activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammal populations; and

(3) Results of the monitoring program, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the detonation and numbers that may have been harassed due to presence within the safety zone.

(g) An annual report must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, no later than 120 days prior to the date of expiration of the annual Letter of Authorization in order for issuance of a Letter of Authorization for the following year. This annual report must contain the following information:

(1) Date and time of all tests conducted under the expiring Letter of Authorization;

(2) A description of all pre-test and post-test activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammal populations;

(3) Results of the monitoring program, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the detonation and numbers that may have been harassed due to presence within the designated safety zone;

(4) If one or more species' take levels have been reached or exceeded during the previous year, additional documentation must be provided on the

taking and a description of any measures that will be taken in the following year to prevent exceeding the authorized incidental take level.

(5) Results of any population assessment studies made on marine mammals in the Outer Sea Test Range during the previous year.

§ 216.156 Renewal of Letter of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106 for the activity identified in § 216.151(a) will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Timely receipt of the reports required under § 216.155(f) and (g), which have been reviewed by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, and determined to be acceptable;

(2) A determination that the maximum incidental take authorizations in § 216.151(b) will not be exceeded; and

(3) A determination that the mitigation measures required under § 216.153(b) and the Letter of Authorization have been undertaken.

(b) If a species' annual authorization is exceeded, the National Marine Fisheries Service will review the documentation submitted with the annual report required under § 216.155(g), to determine that the taking is not having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock involved.

(c) Notice of issuance of a renewal of the Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890–15891, Apr. 10, 1996]

§ 216.157 Modifications to Letter of Authorization.

(a) In addition to complying with the provisions of § 216.106, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification, including withdrawal or suspension, to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notice and an opportunity for public comment. For purposes of this paragraph, renewal of a Letter of Authorization under § 216.146, without modi-

fication, is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the National Marine Fisheries Service determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in § 216.151, or that significantly and detrimentally alters the scheduling of explosives detonation within the area specified in § 216.151, the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106, or renewed pursuant to this section may be substantively modified without prior notice and an opportunity for public comment. A notice will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER subsequent to the action.

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AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 742a *et seq.*, 1361 *et seq.*, and 1531–1544, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Introduction

§ 217.1 Purpose of regulations.

The regulations of parts 216 through 227 are promulgated to implement the following statutes enforced by the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, which regulate the taking, possession, transportation, sale, purchase,