



NOAA
FISHERIES

**Southeast
Regional
Office**

Overview of Codified Text for Gear Required by the DESCEND Act of 2020

August 24, 2021

Required fishing gear

- Applies to a person on board a vessel to fish for Gulf reef fish in the Gulf exclusive economic zone
- A venting tool or descending device must be on the vessel and such person must use the gear as specified for each gear type
- The gear must be rigged and ready for use while fishing is occurring must and must be on the vessel
- The requirements are effective until January 14, 2026



Venting Tool

- Capable of penetrating the abdomen of a fish to release gases in the body cavity when a fish is retrieved from depth
- Must be a sharpened, hollow instrument that allows air to escape
- A 16–gauge needle is the minimum diameter hollow tube that must be used
- A device that is not hollow, such as a knife or an ice pick, is not a venting tool and will cause additional damage to a fish



Descending Device

- An instrument capable of releasing fish at a depth sufficient for the fish to be able to recover from the effects of barotrauma
- Must be a weighted hook, lip clamp, or container that will hold the fish while it is lowered to depth
- Must be capable of releasing the fish automatically, by the device operator, or by allowing the fish to escape on its own when at depth
- Must use a minimum of a 16-ounce weight and a minimum of a 60-ft length of line

