

Summary of Northern California Hoop Net Regulations

New regulation requirements effective January 1, 2026

If using hoop nets south of Point Arguello, Santa Barbara County, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions on the [CDFW Recreational Lobster](#) web page.

North of Point Arguello, Santa Barbara County

- **Hoop Net Allowance:** unlimited
 - **Except on public piers,** you cannot use more than two (2) rods and lines, two (2) hand lines, or two (2) nets, traps or other legal devices (including hoop nets) to take crabs.
- **Service Interval (statewide):** Hoop nets must be serviced every 2 hours; it is unlawful to abandon or leave unchecked a hoop net for more than 2 hours. Any hoop net left unchecked or abandoned for more than 2 hours may be seized.
- **Surface Buoy Marking Requirements (statewide):** A main buoy is required for hoop nets used offshore (does not include piers and jetties). **Main buoys are no larger than 6 inches in diameter and 14 inches in length** and must be marked as follows:
 1. CPFV – vessel registration number,
 2. Licensed Guide – ID Number,
 3. For all other cases – Operator’s 10-digit GO ID Number

***NEW* Marking Requirements**

- **Allow one additional buoy** – An optional marker buoy no larger than 6 inches in diameter and 14 inches in length may be used. It must be solid orange and contain a unique letter marking “H” that is at least 2 inches in height and ¼” thick located on two opposing sides of the buoy.



Letter H must be marked on this side and on the other side of the buoy

Figure 1. Example of orange marker buoy with letter H that is to be marked on two opposing sides of buoy. Diameter of buoy is no greater than 6 inches and the length is no greater than 14 inches.

- **Allow surface line length between the main buoy and marker buoy to be up to 12 feet** - When using more than 6 feet of line it will need to be marked as shown below in Figure 2.

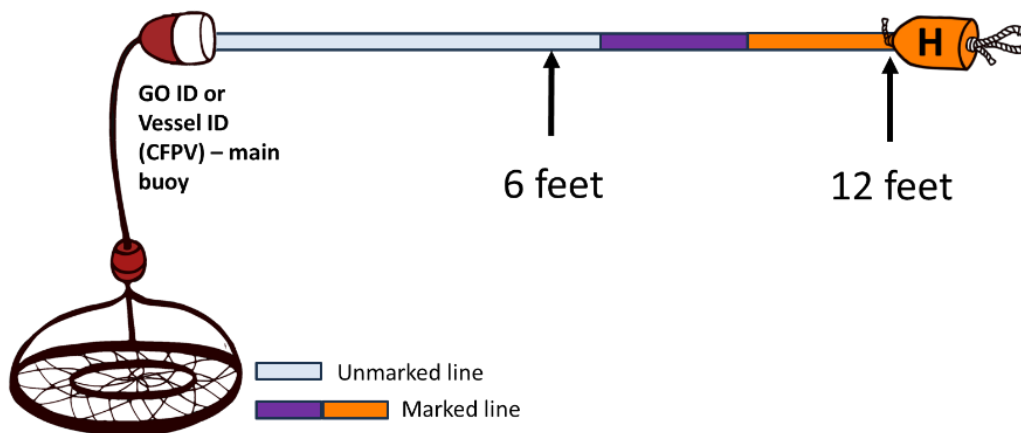


Figure 2. When using greater than 6 feet of surface line, the line must be marked with a 24 to 26-inch solid orange color located at the terminal end of the line adjacent to the marker buoy and next to a 24 to 26-inch solid purple mark with no unmarked line between the two colors.

Statewide Legal Hoop Net Configurations

Hoop Net Type A (see example in Figure 3)

- Fishing gear that is comprised of one (1) to three (3) rigid ring(s), with each ring measuring no greater than 36 inches in inside diameter nor less than 10 inches in inside diameter, which is/are connected to non-metallic soft mesh thereby forming a circular-shaped net with an enclosed bottom.
- Lift lines shall be attached only to the top ring.
- A second and third rigid ring(s) may be connected by non-metallic soft mesh to the top ring; however, each ring must be equal in size to or smaller than the ring above it.
- When the net is raised the top ring shall be above and parallel to all other rings, with the enclosed bottom portion of the non-metallic soft mesh even with or hanging below all other rings.
- All parts of the hoop net shall collapse and lie flat when resting on the ocean floor in such a manner that the gear does not entrap or restrict the free movement of crustaceans until lifted.
- When suspended from lift lines, the entire hoop net shall measure no taller than 36 inches.
- The ring material shall not be thicker than one (1) inch in any dimension.

Hoop Net Type B (see example in Figure 3)

- Fishing gear that is comprised of two (2) rigid rings (not including the bait ring), with the bottom ring measuring no greater than 36 inches in inside diameter and the top ring measuring no less than 15 inches in inside diameter.
- The top ring shall be connected to the bottom ring and supported by no more than six (6) rigid straight support arms, and the assembled frame shall measure no more than 10 inches tall.
- The rings and support material shall not be thicker than one (1) inch in any dimension.
- All rings shall be connected by non-metallic soft mesh, thereby forming a net with an enclosed bottom.
- Lift lines shall be attached only to the top ring.
- When suspended from lift lines the enclosed bottom portion of the net shall be even with or hanging below all other rings, and the entire net shall measure no taller than 30 inches.
- It is unlawful to have any entrances below the top ring.
- A bait ring may be used if it is attached to the bottom half of the net and is not attached to any part of the rigid frame.



Figure 3. Examples of commercially available hoop nets. The net on the left (blue line) is an example of a Type B hoop net. The net on the right (red/orange line) is an example of a Type A hoop net.

Statewide Tampering Prohibition

It is unlawful to move, damage or destroy another person's hoop net. When on a vessel, hoop nets may be used by another person as long as the owner or operator of that hoop net is present.