

SEA GRANT

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Is it worth five thousand dollars to do it your way? Five thousand dollars is the minimum fine for not following the Alabama Marine Resources Division regulations for building and deploying an artificial reef.

The penalty may seem a little high (the maximum is ten thousand dollars) but the purpose is to protect and enhance the very successful artificial reef program in the waters off of Alabama. The reef program is based on a 1200 square mile area where the Corp of Engineers has permitted the Marine Resources Division to oversee artificial reef construction.

Anyone may apply to the Marine Resources Division (MRD) for a permit to place approved materials in the designated reef areas. The key words are “approved materials” and “designated reef area”. In order to legally deploy an artificial reef, the reef must be inspected by MRD personnel and placed within the designated areas. Failure to have an approved reef or failure to put the reef in a designated area triggers the five thousand dollar fine.

An excellent guide to meeting the MRD requirements for construction and deployment can be found at www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/saltwater.

There are several key elements to successful and legal reef deployment. First, the materials must be durable, clean and have enough weight to stay where placed.

Contacting MRD for a pre-inspection before committing to a particular design or kind of

material is a good idea. Second, the actual reef must be inspected and permitted by MRD. Third, the reef must be deployed on a week day during daylight hours and in accordance with a float plan filed with MRD. If you have any questions about building a reef, contact MRD at 861-2882 or 968-7576.