



Crew Preparedness

Are you prepared to go fishing? It's more than having all the necessary stores and supplies on board your vessel for the trip. Being prepared for a trip must also include having all the required safety equipment on board in operational condition, having all the required lifesaving and survival equipment installed and ready for use, and having completed all the required safety orientation, safety instruction and emergency drills.

Requirements for commercial fishing industry vessels are found in the regulations at 46 Code of Federal Regulations Part 28. All vessels must meet certain requirements, and documented vessels operating beyond the Boundary Lines or with more than 16 individuals on board must meet certain additional requirements.

Whatever fishing vessel you are working on, you must have installed or carry the following safety and lifesaving equipment:

- Life preservers or other personal flotation devices;
- Ring life buoys;
- A survival craft (as applicable);
- Distress signals;
- An EPIRB; and
- Fire extinguishers.

The equipment must be marked as required, in good working order, ready for immediate use, and maintained and inspected in accordance with the regulations or manufacturers guidelines/industry standards.

If you are working on a documented fishing vessel operating beyond the Boundary Line or with more than 16 POB, you must also carry or have installed the following safety equipment:

- Fireman's outfits and/or SCBAs (as applicable);
- First aid equipment and trained individuals;
- Guards for exposed hazards;
- Navigational information;
- Magnetic steering compass;
- Anchor(s) and radar reflector(s) (as applicable);
- General alarm system;
- Communication equipment (as applicable);
- High water alarms;
- Bilge pump, piping, and dewatering system; and
- Electronic position fixing device (as applicable)

Having all the required safety, lifesaving, and survival equipment on your vessel is not enough. You must know how to use it in an emergency. The Coast Guard recommends that each person complete fishing vessel safety and survival awareness training. Statistics show that those who have and use safety and survival equipment are more than twice as likely to survive a casualty.

Safety orientation, instruction and drills must be conducted on documented fishing vessels operating beyond the Boundary Line or with more than 16 POB.

The master of a vessel is responsible to ensure each individual on board receives a safety orientation on at least the following items before getting underway.

- Survival craft station(s) and assignments;
- Fire and emergency, and abandon ship signals;
- Stowage and donning of immersion suits;
- Procedures for making distress calls;
- Individual responsibilities during an emergency;
- Procedures for rough weather and conditions; &
- Procedures for anchoring; man overboard, and fighting a fire.

At least once each month (every 30 days), instruction and drills must be conducted on board the vessel as if there were an actual emergency, including participation by all individuals and use of emergency equipment for:

- Abandoning the vessel;
- Fighting a fire in different locations on the vessel;
- Recovering an individual from the water;
- Minimizing the effects of unintentional flooding;
- Launching survival craft, & recovering lifeboats;
- Donning immersions suits and other PFDs;
- Donning a fireman's outfit and an SCBA;
- Making a voice radio distress call and using visual distress signals;
- Activating the general alarm; and
- Reporting inoperative alarm systems and fire detection systems.

To ensure you are prepared for your fishing trip, contact your local Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Safety Examiner for a courtesy, no-fault dockside safety examination. For more safety information or to view other references, visit our Web Site at www.FishSafe.info.