

NIOSH ALERT

Preventing Drownings of Commercial Fishermen

ATTENTION!

Fishermen greatly reduce their risk of drowning if they wear personal flotation devices while working on the decks of commercial fishing vessels.

Commercial fishermen should take the following steps to protect themselves from falling overboard and drowning:

1. Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) while working on deck. Types of available PFDs are listed in *NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Drownings of Commercial Fishermen*.
2. Make sure a rescue system is in place for quickly retrieving a person from the water.
3. Never work alone on deck.
4. Use safety lines (also known as guy lines, jack lines, jill lines, and dog lines) when possible.
5. Make sure decks are as clean and clear as possible to prevent slipping or tripping.
3. Use nonskid materials where possible on deck.
4. Conduct and document man-overboard drills.
5. Ensure that more than one person on board is familiar with and can operate the vessel in an emergency.
6. Carry on board the required number of persons certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) [46 CFR 28.210].

Vessel skippers or owners should take the following steps to protect their workers:

1. Ensure that vessels are equipped with at least one USCG-approved PFD or immersion suit of the proper size for each person on board [46 CFR 28.110].
2. Install or extend guard rails where possible.



Fishermen who do not wear PFDs while working on the decks of commercial fishing vessels are at high risk of drowning.

For additional information, see *NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Drownings of Commercial Fishermen* [DHHS (NIOSH) 94-107], or call 1-800-35-NIOSH. Single copies are available free from the following:

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