



Contact: Monica Allen
301-713-2370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2011

NOAA Fisheries Service to update guidelines to promote safety in fisheries regulations
Comments sought for improving safety at sea

NOAA's Fisheries Service is asking for public input as it starts the process of updating the national guidelines that promote the safety of commercial and recreational fishermen in federal waters. These guidelines are used by federal fisheries managers as they draft fishing rules and regulations around the nation.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that guides fishing in federal waters, National Standard 10 states: "Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, promote the safety of human life at sea."

The current National Standard 10 guidelines, which help fishery managers implement that standard, were drafted in 1998 and since then fishery management and analytical methods to evaluate safety have changed and improved. Through the revision of these guidelines, NOAA's Fisheries Service intends to enhance consideration of safety issues in fisheries management. NOAA is therefore issuing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register. The notice describes issues related to safety of human life at sea that NOAA's Fisheries Service is considering addressing in the guidelines. For example, guidance on how to analyze fatality statistics to identify and address hazards within a fishery could be added to the National Standard 10 guidelines.

"The safety of fishermen is a top priority for NOAA," said Eric Schwaab, assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "The current standards need updating, and our goal is to get as much information as we can about how to make them work better."

Commercial fishing is an extremely dangerous occupation. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, during 1992-2008, the average annual fatality rate for commercial fishermen was 128 deaths per 100,000 workers, compared to the average of four deaths per 100,000 workers for all U.S. occupations.

In addition to inviting public comment and information through the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking, NOAA is hosting a public meeting on May 19, 2011 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the NOAA Science Center, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Md. NOAA's Fisheries Service may hold additional public meetings at other locations around the country during the comment period.

Written comments and information in response to the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking must be received by July 20, 2011. You may submit comments by any one of the following methods:

- via the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> using the identifier "0648-BA74"; or
- faxed to 301-713-1193, attention Debra Lambert; or
- submitted by mail to:
Debra Lambert
NOAA's Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13403,

Silver Spring, MD 20910

After considering public input from this first public comment period, NOAA will propose draft revisions to the National Standard 10 guidelines and hold another public comment period. Additional information about the National Standard 10 guidelines can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/domes_fish/index.htm.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.