



Issue 10E

# Fishing Vessel Drill Conductors



No doubt, fishing at sea is a very dangerous occupation. Fishing fatality rates vary substantially by fishery. The evolution of the fishing industry over the centuries has been accompanied by the development of skills and experience in vessel design, construction and equipment, as well as in fishing operations and safety at sea. Technical developments drastically accelerates this process; widespread use of outboard engines, the use of hydraulics for hauling gear and catches, synthetic nets and lines, fish finding electronics and refrigeration equipment led to massive leaps forward in productivity and profitability. Although fishing, like almost all other occupations, is considerably less dangerous today than in the past, fishers face a risk of death on the job that is 25 to 30 times greater than any other occupation.

Some factors rendering fishing one of the most dangerous occupations in the world are:

- excessive fishing effort;
- increased competition;
- reduced profitability;
- economies in vessel maintenance, equipment and manpower;
- fatigue;
- recklessness;
- fisheries management measures (which do not take sufficient account of the human element or fishers' safety into consideration);

diversified fishing operations unaccompanied by training, traditional experience and skills.

Individuals, who meet the training requirements outlined in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (46CFR), section 28.270(c) for conducting drills and providing instruction, may qualify to be *Fishing Vessel Drill Conductors*.

Drill Conductors are trained to ensure effective approaches to safety at sea, relying on three lines of defense:

- prevention (the most reliable and cost-effective component): suitable equipment, training, experience, information and judgement to avoid getting into trouble in the first place;
- survival and self-rescue: the equipment, training and attitudes necessary to survive and effect self-

rescue when things start to go wrong;

- Search and Rescue (the most costly and least reliable of the three levels): systems of alert, search and rescue which are called upon when the first two lines of defense have failed.

Individuals on board fishing vessels should be drilling, at least once each month, to build upon experience and familiarity with their duties and their responses to at least the following situations:

- (1) Abandoning the vessel;
- (2) Fighting a fire in different locations on board;
- (3) Recovering an individual from the water;
- (4) Minimizing the affects of flooding;
- (5) Launching and recovering survival crafts;
- (6) Donning PFDs and immersion suits;
- (7) Donning a fireman's outfit and a self-contained breathing apparatus, if the vessel is so equipped;
- (8) Making a voice radio distress call and using visual distress signals;
- (9) Activating the general alarm; and
- (10) Reporting inoperative alarm systems and fire detection systems.

"Knowledge is power." So, empower yourself today: learn the skills you need to survive, practice, and then, practice some more. Conduct emergency drills on your vessel as realistically as possible, using the emergency equipment, testing all the alarms and detection systems, donning protective clothing, flotation devices, and immersion suits. Drills are an investment on your life and those you care for. The consequences of loss of life at sea may fall heavily on dependents and those left behind.

Support Drill Conductors & Survive to Fish Another Day...