

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 01-19

ALWAYS WEAR A PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE

“Drowning following a fall overboard is the second leading cause of death among commercial fishermen nationwide. Of the 204 fishermen who died from falls overboard between 2000 and 2016, NONE of them were wearing a personal flotation device (PFD).”

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Researchers from the NIOSH Alaska Pacific Office conducted an evaluation with commercial fishermen from 4 gear groups (crabbers, trawlers, longliners, and gillnetters) to rate the comfort and acceptability of six modern PFDs. Commercial fishing vessel operators may find the evaluations helpful in promoting PFD wear aboard their vessel(s). Visit the NIOSH Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Home Page: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/fishing

The gear group specific results can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2013-131/default.html>

In January 2017, the Coast Guard published [Coast Guard Voluntary Safety Initiatives and Good Marine Practices for Commercial Fishing Industry Vessels](#). In it, the Coast Guard recommended, **“Each individual on board the vessel, when on an open deck, should wear a flotation device of sufficient buoyancy to keep the wearer afloat.”**

Sector Anchorage Commercial Fishing Safety Examiners will discuss the wearing of a PFD on open decks while conducting dockside safety exams. The Coast Guard strongly recommends development and enforcement of a PFD wear policy for all commercial fishing vessels.

Questions regarding commercial fishing vessel requirements and best practices should be directed to Sector Anchorage’s Commercial Fishing Vessel Coordinator, Mr. Russel Hazlett, at (907) 428-4154 or by email at Russell.C.Hazlett@uscg.mil.



Sincerely,

S. C. MACKENZIE
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska