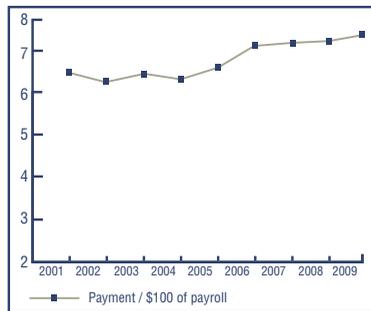


# Fish Safe:

## Quick-Facts Safety Sheet for the Commercial Fishing Sector

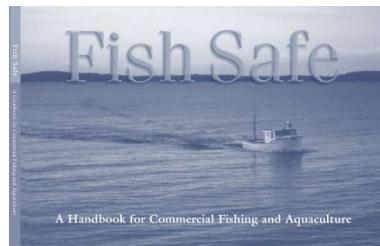
Making a living on the water is part of Nova Scotia's heritage. It's also one of the most dangerous occupations in the province. Every year, hundreds of Nova Scotians are injured in salt water fishing. Tragically, in 2008 alone, seven people died in the fishing industry off of Nova Scotia's coastlines.

Workplace injury has tragic human consequences. It also often has financial consequences - among covered employers, claims costs (the number of claims and the length of time it takes workers to return to the job) leads to higher premiums.



The rate for workplace injury insurance in salt water fishing has been continually increasing since 2004.

This sheet is an overview of some common safety hazards in the industry.



To learn more, please see our full Fish Safe booklet.

### Understand the hazards.

Salt water fishing has many hazards. Many are serious and can lead to tragic consequences. Others can, and often do, result from cumulative effects over time. See the reverse for more on hazards, how to manage them to prevent injury, and to keep your crew safe.

### Register your WCB account at [my-account.ns.ca](http://my-account.ns.ca).

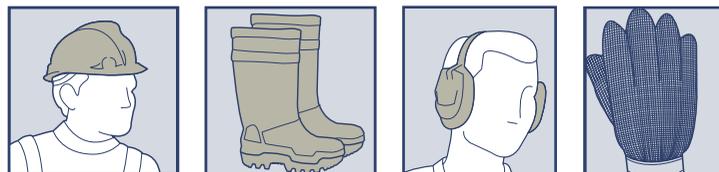
Calculate the cost of injury to your workplace, and the impact preventing injury could have.

### Safe Procedures: Every time you leave shore.

Use a pre-sailing checklist. Is the boat seaworthy? Is equipment properly secured? Are supplies properly stored? Have you prepared and submitted a float plan? See *Fish Safe: A Handbook for Commercial Fishing and Aquaculture* for these and other details.

### PPE: Personal Protective Equipment.

Flotation devices, hard hats, steel-toed boots, hearing protection, proper gloves, eye protection - all are critical to commercial fishing. Know what's needed and ensure your employees wear it.



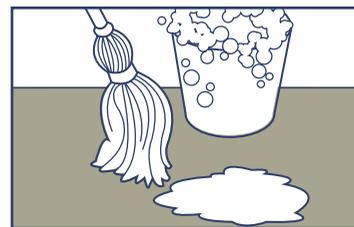
## Common Injuries in the Fishing Industry

### Musculoskeletal injuries.



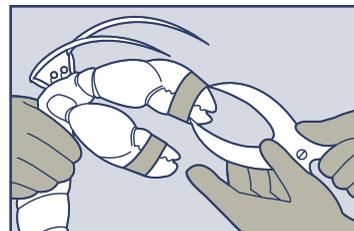
Fishing is hard work. Heavy lifts are common, and safe lifting practices are important to prevent injury.

### Slips and falls aboard a vessel.



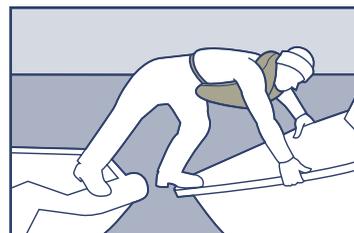
Wet, slippery surfaces are a constant hazard. Fish slime and other debris add to slippery surfaces.

### Cuts and lacerations.



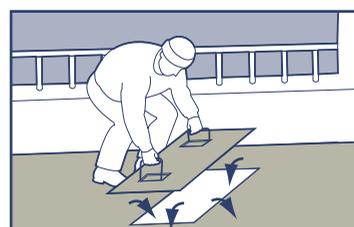
Knives and other equipment such as hooks have sharp edges or points. Cuts and puncture wounds are also common when handling lobster and fish with sharp teeth and fins.

### Falling overboard.



Falling or being pulled overboard is a real risk aboard fishing vessels, often with tragic consequences.

### Confined spaces.



Depleted oxygen levels can create serious risk in compartments, hulls, engine rooms. Training and safe work practices are critical.

Sound familiar? Check out more common hazards and recommended fixes on the reverse.

## Common hazards and suggested fixes in commercial fishing

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Open water and weather conditions.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Risk of going overboard, drowning, vessel capsizing or other emergency at sea.
<b>Precaution</b>	Wear flotation devices when working on deck. Monitor weather and act accordingly. Know evacuation and emergency procedures. Ensure all but operator stays clear of nets, traps and winch during setting. For details specific to different situations please see the Fish Safe handbook.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Sharp edges: Knives, shells, fins, debris, rocks.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Cuts and lacerations in shucking scallops, other cutting and baiting, or otherwise on board a vessel.
<b>Precaution</b>	Wear gloves when appropriate. Use caution in scallop shucking and sorting catch.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Lifting, twisting, other hard work.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Back strain, shoulder strain, other musculoskeletal injury.
<b>Precaution</b>	Get help with heavy loads. Get as close as possible to the object, lift with the power coming from your legs. Avoid twisting your body - keep the "nose between the toes."

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Slippery or dangerous surfaces, often compounded by rolling seas.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Falling: into fish holds, overboard, down stairs or simply on the floor.
<b>Precaution</b>	Wear proper footwear. Ensure clean-up of spills, fish slime, guts, etc. happens as soon as possible.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Repetitive strain.</b> (Repeatedly bending at waist, motion of wrists, shoulders, etc.)
<b>Danger</b>	Cumulative soft tissue injury (carpal tunnel, other kinds of strains from cutting or shucking at sea).
<b>Precaution</b>	Exercise or stretch before starting work. Encourage breaks and stretching.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Air quality, fumes, explosive atmosphere.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Oxygen deprivation in hulls and below deck, gas in engine rooms, carbon monoxide, Freon, ammonia, etc.; possible explosion or fire.
<b>Precaution</b>	Enter confined spaces only with the right training and equipment. If you notice a smell leave immediately and report it.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Fatigue.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Improper rest due to cramped sleeping quarters or rough seas.
<b>Precaution</b>	Bring only required personal items aboard. Be considerate of other crew members trying to rest.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Cold temperatures.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Freezing, hypothermia, frostbite.
<b>Precaution</b>	Wear proper clothing. Have first aid and survival suits accessible. Monitor weather forecasts. Work in pairs.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Hoists, lifts, derricks.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Load falls off or hits someone.
<b>Precaution</b>	Inspect hoist regularly. Use a spotter. Always check area for people before moving load. Ensure emergency shutoff is within reach.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>High temperatures and hot surfaces.</b>
<b>Danger</b>	Burns in engine rooms, exposure to sun and heat.
<b>Precaution</b>	Wear appropriate PPE in engine rooms.

The above represent just a few of the more common hazards across the commercial fishing sector. For specific, more detailed information, please see **Fish Safe: A Handbook for Commercial Fishing and Aquaculture.**

**Safety is everyone's responsibility.** Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment. Workers have a responsibility to work safely and follow procedures.

FOR COPIES OF Fish Safe, PLEASE CONTACT: Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council - 902.742.6167