

REFERENCE
DOCUMENT



SETTING THE COURSE FOR SAFETY

PREVENTING FALLS OVERBOARD

DF-030

A video made
with the lobster fishers of
the Magdalen Islands
and the Gaspé

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

For the purposes of training, guidance and discussion,
this document summarizes the preventive knowledge and strategies
dealt with in the video.

The Main Strategies for Preventing Falls Overboard...



when the traps are loaded

- Assign the loading of the traps to the person who will drop them
- Determine and respect the order in which the traps will be set
- Arrange the ropes to avoid the risk of being dragged when the traps are dropped
- Place the buoys for each trawl in the right place
- Adapt the height of the load of traps to the weather conditions
- Respect the limitations specified in the stability booklet for the number of traps and the height of the load
- Provide enough space for the person who drops the first trawls



when the traps are initially set

- Add an extra deckhand if space permits
- Ensure that the person who drops the traps is the one who loaded them
- Agree on the method of setting the traps and adapt it to the weather conditions
- Slow down the speed of the lobster boat
- Stay clear of the ropes



when the buoy is snared

- Stop and position the boat properly
- Have the right sized gaff adapted to the boat
- Let go of the gaff if there is too much resistance
- Ensure that the bulwark height is safe
- Store the gaff safely and accessibly
- Communicate with and be seen by the captain



when the traps are hauled up

- Ensure that the bulwark height is safe
- Avoid leaning too far out of the boat
- Use the fixed structure of the hauler as support if needed
- Position the hauler controls to minimize the risk of getting caught in the sheaves
- Promote the installation of a hauler that will reduce effort
- Manage the lines at the foot of the hauler in order to work with the feet firmly planted on the deck
- Set up the trap table to ensure the traps are stable
- Set up the trap table to provide easy access to the catch and the bait
- Install non-slip material on the table



when the traps are reset

- Slow down the speed of the lobster boat
- Place the ropes on the trap table
- Avoid working with feet on the ropes.
- Communicate with and be seen by the captain
- Keep the deck clean and uncluttered



when the trawls are shifted in the fishing area

- Avoid shifting trawls when the weather is bad
- Only take on the number of trawls that space permits
- Keep the ropes away from the fishers' feet
- Ideally, place the traps on the washboard or the table before dropping them



on the deck

- Regularly clean the work surfaces
- Use non-skid material or mats
- Attach or anchor equipment (live tanks, totes, sorting tables)
- Always remain vigilant



THE RESEARCH

Commercial fishing is a high-risk activity. On lobster boats buffeted by the waves, fishers handle heavy traps and lengths of rope on a slippery, unstable surface, which can lead to falls overboard. The study entitled [*Risk Analysis and Identification of Ways of Preventing Overboard Falls of Crew Members on Québec Lobster Boats*](#) is the first in Québec and Canada to look into the risks of falling overboard, in addition to recording means of prevention and determining promising avenues for reducing risk.

By observing and analyzing the work performed by fishers, the researchers were able to highlight the prevention strategies and know-how developed by fishing crews that help reduce the risks of falls overboard. Some forty of these prevention strategies have been identified.

THE VIDEO

The researchers and the members of the follow-up committee chose the most effective strategies. They are featured in the video, with the goal of raising the awareness of fishers and apprentices of the prevention mechanisms implemented by those in their industry. Filmed on board fishing vessels from the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands, the video shows fishers and deckhands performing their tasks, explaining their occupation and sharing their preventive strategies and “tricks of the trade” for avoiding falls overboard.

Watch the video

<http://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/publications-tools/video/i/100281>

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