

OR -FACE

Crab Fishing Hazard Alert

During 2000-2009 70% of commercial fishing deaths off the US West Coast were caused by drowning. Dungeness crab fisheries had the highest number of fatalities with a rate of 310 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers. Falls overboard accounted for 24% of all fatalities. None of the victims of falls overboard were wearing personal flotation device.*

*DHHS (NIOSH) Publication Number 2011-104, Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. Commercial Fishing Industry: Risk Factors and Recommendations West Coast Region



Illustrator: Joseph Boquiren

Please observe the following safety tips:

- Wear personal flotation device whenever on deck and every time the bar is crossed
- Train crew on man-overboard procedures and practice at least monthly
- Use the most current weather forecasts and bar information
- Use personal locator beacons that are water activated for visibility
- Get vessel stability evaluations to aid in loading properly
- Utilize Coast Guard vessel inspections

Fatal Stories

Case 1: The 43-year-old crab boat captain survived when the vessel he was operating capsized but was pushed up on the jetty. Two crew members (44 and 55 years-old respectively) died after being swept overboard. None of the crew wore life vests or personal floatation devices, nor was there time to do so when the waves hit. They were attempting to cross the bar in rough seas. The victims were part of a three person crew that was preparing for the opening of crab season. When the boat was attempting to cross the bar, seas were estimated at 14 to 16 feet. As it tried to exit it got sideways to the breakers, one end was pushed up and the next wave turned it completely over.

Case 2: A 68-year-old crab boat captain was killed when the vessel he was operating capsized. The victim was part of a fishing crew of three people that

was preparing for the opening of crab season. The boat was roughly three miles out from a bay when it became unstable and began to tilt. Before the crew could determine the problem, the boat was hit by a large wave and tipped on its side. The two deckhands were able to put on personal flotation devices and swim to a nearby boat where they were pulled onboard. The captain was apparently trapped inside the wheelhouse when the boat fully capsized and he was unable to escape.

Case 3: A 38-year-old commercial fisherman was killed when his fishing boat capsized. The 21-foot boat capsized in high waves after an engine failure. Witnesses called for help and reported that there were two men on the boat. Initial responders were not able to locate the men. The search was suspended due to hazardous conditions. One of the two victim's bodies, was found onshore 5 days later. No use of personal flotation devices was described in the reports.

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Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (503)494-2281

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