

Hazard Alert

Loading lobster traps on fishing vessel

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Hazard Summary

A lobster fisher drowned on the first day of the 2007 spring season. The fisher was not wearing a personal floatation device (PFD) and was caught in the trap rope lines and pulled overboard.

On opening day boats rush out to the best fishing grounds and, to save time, it is common for lobster fishers to load as many pots as possible on their boats.

This can result in overloading on boats which leaves little or no room for crew to stand on or move freely on deck. This increases the risk of being tangled in the lines and falling overboard.

Finally, fishers should wear PFDs when working on deck. The lack of a PFD, together with low water temperatures, greatly increases the chance of drowning if you fall overboard.

Preventive Measures

We remind everyone to:

- Wear approved PFDs when working on deck
- Allow space on deck for free movement
- Eliminate or reduce as many risks as possible

The book "[Fish Safe](#)" has more information on safety in fishing and aquaculture. The report on the sinking of the lobster boat "[Evan Richard](#)" is also useful.

Applicable Laws

Occupational Health and Safety Act

[Employer general duty Section 13\(1\)](#): Every employer will take every reasonable precaution to: look after the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace; provide and maintain equipment with proper safety devices; provide information, instruction, and training needed for the safety of the employees; make sure the employees, and the supervisors and foremen, know of any health or safety hazards; make sure employees know how to use all equipment and clothing needed for their protection; carry out the business so employees are not exposed to hazards

Occupational Safety General Regulations

14 - Where a person is exposed to the risk of drowning, an employer shall provide and ensure the use of a personal flotation device that complies with CGSB standard CAN/CGSB-65.11- M88, "Personal Flotation Devices" or an alternative means of protection that provides an equivalent level of safety to prevent the person from drowning.