

Become part of the culture of safety

As I write this article, I am headed out on the Sunbeam from Northeast Harbor on Mount Desert Island in Maine for three days to talk with fishermen on Matinicus, Swan's Island, Frenchboro, and Isle au Haut.

The talks will focus on safety issues and cover topics including: entanglement of lobstermen in trap rope; stability; conserving energy in cold water; dockside exams; indoor winter-time exposures to dust and volatile organic compounds; and upcoming training sessions. There will also be an opportunity to practice getting into survival suits and to make re-boarding ladders.

These sessions are only one of several safety training opportunities now being offered to commercial fishermen around New England. All together, they represent a solid step toward building a seriously needed culture of safety within the Northeast commercial fishing community.

On April 16, members of the Mayor's Seafood Industry Task Force hosted a day-long safety workshop in New Bedford and are planning more (see story page 1A). The Northeast Maritime Institute also

hosted a series of training sessions in April.

John McMillan of McMillan Offshore Survival Training in Belfast, ME is gearing up for another training session when he returns from the International Association of Safety and Survival Trainers.

This training will include: abandoning the vessel; fighting fires; man-overboard recovery; launching survival craft; donning survival suits; making a radio distress call; using flares and other distress signals; and activating alarm systems.

For more information, visit his web site at <www.mcmillanoffshore.com> or call (207) 338-1603.

In Maine, training sessions may also be arranged by calling Kevin Plowman at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Portland at (207) 780-3256 or Garry Moores, Coast Guard fishing vessel safety examiner in Bucksport, at (207) 838-4440.

Drill requirement

The Code of Federal Regulations 46 CFR Chapter 28 requires immersion suits, also known as survival suits, on all

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Therren Dolloff graphic

documented vessels fishing seaward of the boundary line and north of 32°N; and on all vessels fishing in cold waters beyond three miles.

In other waters, a Type I PFD or survival suit is required for each person on all vessels over 40', and a Type I, II, or III PFD or an immersion suit is required for each person on vessels less than 40' long.

The regulations also require that drills be conducted by trained drill instructors on all documented vessels operating beyond the boundary line.

Everyone who steps on board a commercial fishing vessel should be familiar with these requirements and insist

on compliance with them. It's one more way to get everyone on the same page when it comes to safety. ■

FISH SAFE:

- Join the movement to establish a culture of safety within the fleet.
- Participate in a safety training this spring.
- Insist on compliance with federal regulations for survival equipment, training, and drills.



Left, fishermen attending an April 16 safety workshop found getting into the life raft to be surprisingly difficult. Organized by the New Bedford Mayor's Seafood Industry Task Force, the training sessions offered the following safety tips:

Life raft –

- Familiarize yourself with life raft supplies;
- Prepare an emergency bag for yourself to keep with your survival suit that includes items like an extra pair of prescription glasses, water, wool cap, candy, and medicine;
- Check expiration dates; and
- Learn how to right a raft that lands upside down and practice doing it.

Survival suits

up over your head, then strong arm, and, finally, zip all the way up and adjust gloves;

- Cross your legs as you jump into the water; and
- When boarding the raft, have the most agile and fit crewman get in first to help the injured and less fit.

Flares, fire, damage control –

- Shoot off one flare immediately after abandoning ship but save the rest until another vessel or helicopter is nearby;
- Never use an oxygen tank from the First Aid kit to go into a fire to save someone as the tank could explode;
- Get hands-on training to operate



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- Learn how to right a raft that lands upside down and practice doing it.

Survival suits –

- Use plastic grocery bags to cover your shoes for easier movement into the suit;
- Put on your suit on like this: legs-first sitting down, then weak arm, pull hood

most agile and fit crewman get in first to help the injured and less fit.

Flares, fire, damage control –

- Shoot off one flare immediately after abandoning ship but save the rest until another vessel or helicopter is nearby;
- Never use an oxygen tank from the First Aid kit to go into a fire to save someone as the tank could explode;
- Get hands-on training to operate Coast Guard pumps; and
- Learn how to use sweatshirts and other common items to help staunch water flow through leaking hoses and/or the hull. *lcfnl*

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