

# 3078.0 - Adapting first aid trainings to meet the needs of commercial fishermen during the COVID 19 pandemic

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12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

**Session:** Round Table - OHS in a Rapidly Evolving Workplace: Exposure Assessment and Control

**Program:** Occupational Health and Safety

## Abstract

### *Background*

Commercial fishing is dangerous. The US Coast Guard requires each vessel to have at least one CPR/First Aid-trained crewmember. The Fishermen First Aid and Safety Training (FFAST) course, delivered since 2016 and tailored to commercial fishing, was modified during the pandemic to meet public health requirements, to support fishermen at a time when trainings were severely limited.

### *Methods*

FFAST is conducted in fishing ports, and uses skills, scenarios and hazard assessments to deliver first aid training based on injury statistics and fishery-specific working conditions. FFAST shifted to a hybrid format in 2020 with remote instruction coupled with in-person skills training completed by small crews on their fishing vessel. We assessed student knowledge and skills, and whether participants would recommend the course (“very likely” to “very unlikely”) and found the material useful (“very” to “not at all”).

## Results

To date, 30 fishermen with an average of 15 years fishing experience (standard deviation [SD]=11 years) have completed three FFAST hybrid courses delivered in Oregon and Washington. The mean post-course test score was 90.0% (SD=6.8), and all passed the hands-on skill tests. All participants reported being either “very likely” (73.3%) or “likely” (26.7%) to recommend the course, and all reported the material either “very useful” (86.7%) or “useful” (13.3%). Despite preferring in-person training, participants reported the remote sessions “felt like it was one on one” and were a “very good use of time with fewer distractions.” Participants appreciated retaining hands-on skill training.

## Conclusions

First aid training during the COVID-19 pandemic has not been accessible for many commercial fishermen. By successfully adapting our FFAST course to a hybrid model we offered fishermen an opportunity to receive required training while remaining safe. Maintaining such partnerships in the face of COVID-19 challenges is important to ensure long-term sustainability of commercial fishing and fishing communities.

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