FLEET SAFETY FACT SHEET

Freezer Longliners

Crewmember Injuries

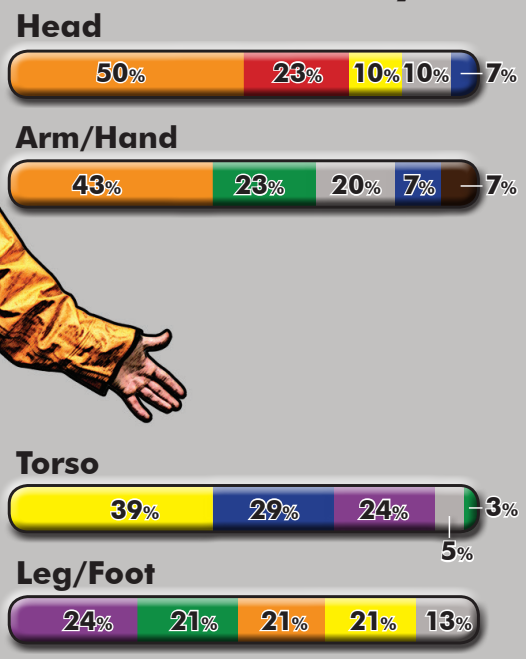
The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) performed a scientific review of workplace safety in the freezer longline fleet to understand the trends and identify opportunities to enhance safety for crews on these vessels. Researchers found that the annual number of injuries in the freezer longline fleet was 25 per year during 2001-2012 for a total of 303 work-related injuries (9 fatal, 294 non-fatal). The risk for non-fatal injuries was 35 per 1,000 full-time equivalent employees, about three times higher than average U.S. workers.

Hauling gear (26% of injuries) was responsible for lacerations, punctures, avulsion injuries, and contusions. Handling frozen fish (22% of injuries) was the most common duty responsible for contusions, fractures, and poisonings. The most frequently injured workers were deckhands (48%) working directly with fishing gear, especially those working the longline roller when hauling in the line.

Injury Type

- Intracranial injury
- Contusion
- Laceration/puncture/avulsion
- Fracture
- Undiagnosed pain/swelling
- Amputation
- Sprain/strain/tear
- Other

Harm to Body



Safety Recommendations

- Commit to 100% incident reporting to give complete data for injury prevention efforts
- Focus on reducing workers' proximity to fish hooks as longline is hauled onboard
- Focus on preventing injuries and reducing hazards while handling gear and frozen fish

Vessel Casualties

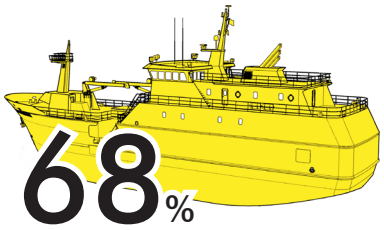
182 vessel casualties were recorded among the freezer longlinger fleet. Vessel casualties are incidents that threaten the safety of a vessel such as: fires, flooding, and loss of propulsion or steering. Vessel casualties are hazardous incidents that can injure workers.

The most common types of vessel casualties were loss of electrical power and propulsion, with loss of propulsion as the more serious casualty. However, a decrease in the risk of serious vessel casualties has been achieved since 2007, after vessels made changes required by the Coast Guard Alternate Compliance and Safety Agreement (ACSA).

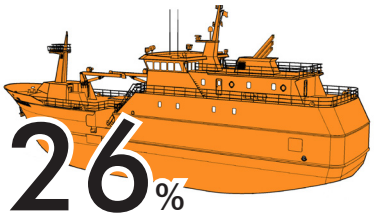
Safety Recommendations

- Maintain ACSA enrollment and examine the specific injuries and vessel casualties occurring on individual vessels
- Conduct monthly safety drills including abandon ship, MOB, and fire drills

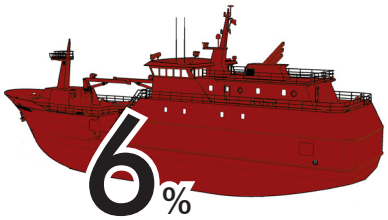
120 vessel casualties were **minor**, meaning the problem was fixed at sea by the crew without any help.



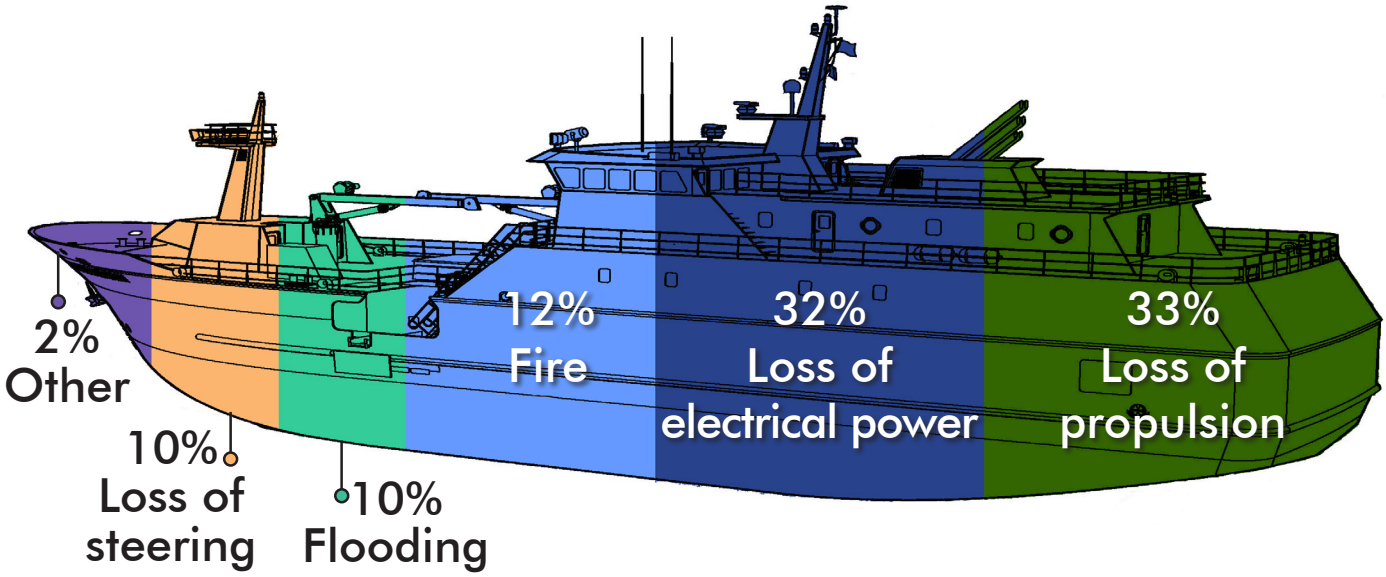
46 vessel casualties were **moderate**, meaning the vessel returned to port for repairs.



11 vessel casualties were **serious** (64% due to loss of propulsion), meaning the vessel had to be towed to port for repairs.



*Total number of vessel casualties by severity does not equal 182 due to missing data on five cases.



Lucas, D.L., Kincl, L.D., Bovbjerg, V.E., Lincoln, J.M., Branscum, A.J., 2014. Work-Related Traumatic Injuries Onboard Freezer-Trawlers and Freezer-Longliners Operating in Alaskan Waters during 2001-2012. Am J Ind Med 57, 826-836.

Lucas, D.L., Kincl, L.D., Bovbjerg, V.E., Branscum, A.J., Lincoln, J.M., 2014. Primary Prevention of Fishing Vessel Disasters: Evaluation of a United States Coast Guard Policy Intervention. Marine Policy 50, 67-73.

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