

# FISHING VESSEL CLAIMS 2017 - 2022



INTERNATIONALLY THE SEA FISHING SECTOR IS RECOGNISED AS ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING AND HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES TO WORK IN, SUFFERING HIGHER RATES OF FATAL AND SERIOUS ACCIDENTS WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER INDUSTRIES, SUCH AS CONSTRUCTION AND AGRICULTURE. CLUB INCIDENT DATA FROM 2017 TO 2022 SHOWED THAT 96% OF ALL CLAIMS ON FISHING VESSELS WERE CREW RELATED, WITH 46% OF THESE CLAIMS OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF PERSONAL INJURY.

The most common injuries among the Club's fishing vessel Membership are crew injuries related to manual handling and these are also the second most costly, as shown in figure 1.

Incidents varied from musculoskeletal injuries to the back because of poor manual handling techniques to injuries sustained while handling fishing nets. Crew members involved in manual handling tasks should be trained to use the correct techniques, and mechanised handling wherever possible. Further considerations for reducing the risk of manual handling incidents include conducting a toolbox talk prior to carrying out lifting operations and providing training on the correct selection of equipment and its use. Other considerations include splitting the load, sharing the load with other crew members and improving the workplace layout to reduce the amount of lifting, so that less repetitive movements are needed.

## OPERATING MACHINERY

When crew members are operating long line winches and equipment they should not wear loose fitting clothing or wet weather gear that could get entangled in the lines and hooks. Emergency stop systems located in the proximity of the

winch controls may be implemented to try and mitigate this issue. Effective training for the crew operating the winches and line haulers is also important. The same applies to the operating of fish processing and filleting equipment in the factory.

## SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slips, trips and falls have the highest incident total cost, with leg injuries as the result of a fall the most common and most expensive injury. Fishing vessel operators can reduce the number of slips, trips and falls on board by implementing several key procedures. Firstly they should ensure that deck surfaces are kept as clear as possible from any obstructions, such as fishing gear, ropes and tools. All deck levels should also be adequately lit so that any hazards can be easily identified. Changes in deck heights, access coamings and stairs/steps should be highlighted with high visibility paint or chevron type tape so that they are visible. This can be a common issue on fishing vessels, especially on the trawl or working deck areas. Non-slip coatings, duckboards, gratings or rubber mats should be used as appropriate, as unprotected decks can present a particular risk, especially when ice or fish guts may be present. Furthermore, adequate handrails and

other forms of support should also be in place to reduce the risk of falling while moving around the vessel. Crew should be encouraged to hold on to railings where possible while moving around the vessel. This extends to ensuring that hatchways are closed when not in use. The Club has experienced a number of incidents where crew members have fallen down open hatches. Open fish hold hatchways should be protected with portable or temporary railings/stanchions and wires while offloading, with crew keeping clear of suspended loads during discharge of the catch.

## PPE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided for all crew members by encouraging safe practices, operators can further minimise the risk of slips, trips and falls. Crew members should also be aware of any company procedures relating to working on deck in heavy weather, particularly when shipping seas, and this includes the PPE required for different activities.

## SAFETY PROCEDURES

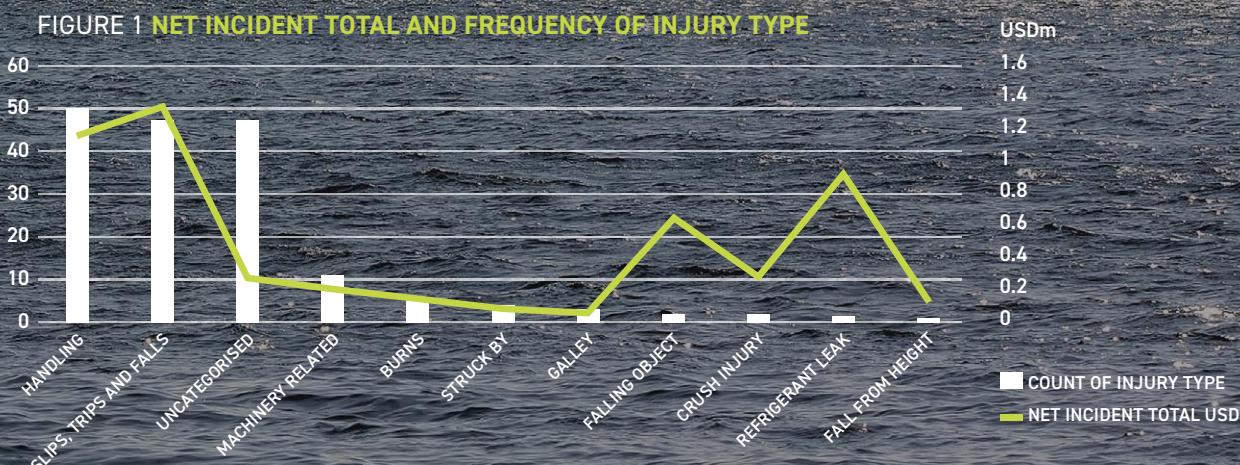
Fishing vessel operators should ensure that all crew members are aware of the established safety procedures and that they are adhered to when working with machinery or in the engine room.



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**FIGURE 1 NET INCIDENT TOTAL AND FREQUENCY OF INJURY TYPE**



All machinery should be regularly maintained, ideally as part of a preventative maintenance programme, in line with the manufacturer's recommended maintenance regime and any necessary repairs, such as oil and filter changes, should be conducted promptly. All potential risks posed from working in the engine room, as well as with machinery, should be assessed regularly and documented in a risk assessment.

Alongside the risk assessment, certain tasks within the engine room may require a permit-to-work to be completed. There should also be procedures in place for mechanical and electrical lock outs, as well as hot work and enclosed space entry. Belts, rotating shafts and couplings and hot surfaces within the engine room should be properly guarded. Burns and injuries sustained after body parts have been caught in machinery are commonplace among the Club's fishing vessel fleet. The provision of these guards includes belt drives that may be located beneath floor plates. Operators should also ensure all crew members are aware of the necessity to keep the engine room and bilges clean, with bilge level alarms operational and regularly tested. This can help provide early detection of leaks

of water, fuel and oil before they develop further. Additionally operators should ensure proper ventilation is provided in the engine room and that any fumes emitted from the machinery are adequately extracted. Finally, if crew members are working in the engine room alone, they should inform someone of how long they intend to be working in the space.

#### REFRIGERATION LEAKS

Incidents as a result of refrigeration leaks are not a frequent occurrence on board fishing vessels. However, when they do occur they have the potential to cause severe harm to health due to their asphyxiating nature. If the correct refrigeration system maintenance procedures are not followed, it can lead to refrigeration burns. The pipework and fittings of the refrigeration system should be clearly marked. A maintenance plan needs to be in place to check and record the condition of the system at regular intervals, with perishable components within the system changed in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements. Maintenance should only be conducted by authorised personnel. The maintenance plan should also include periodical tests of emergency trips and remote shutdowns of the refrigeration system. Any repairs

conducted on the refrigeration plant should be done when the system is fully disabled and locked out via a tagout system. In the unfortunate event of a refrigerant leak it is vital that emergency response procedures are followed, with the crew well drilled in the required actions. To facilitate prompt evacuation, emergency escape routes should be known and free of obstructions. In areas that may be at risk of refrigerant leaks consideration should be given to the provision of emergency escape breathing devices in addition to any mandatory requirements.

Members requiring any further guidance are advised to contact the Britannia loss prevention department.

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