



FISHERMEN **HELPING** FISHERMEN

# Annual Report

2020-2021 •

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## Message from the Program Manager

As the prior fiscal year 2020 came to a close, the challenge of health and safety not only as an industry concern, but in every facet of society, began to take center stage, as a once in a hundred years pandemic began to rage across the globe. In responding to the crisis, Fish Safe's position as a well-established and well-organized health and safety organization proved to be an indispensable industry asset.

Although deemed early on as being an essential part of Canada's food supply infrastructure, the seafood industry, in both its harvest and processing operations, had to prove it was both willing and capable of operating in a fashion that would preserve the health and safety of its workers, customers and stakeholders alike.

In this respect, Fish Safe's relationships with key stakeholders like WorkSafeBC and Transport Canada served to expedite communication and issue resolution while helping to maintain the operational continuity of the wild harvest fleet. As the COVID-19 crisis evolved, Fish Safe was instrumental in helping coordinate the creation of protocols and procedures for fishermen that ultimately gave the Province of BC and its health authority unit the needed confidence that the commercial fishing fleet could operate while preserving the health and safety of its workers as well as members of vulnerable coastal communities throughout BC.

Although uncertainty came to define the year that was, Fish Safe remained active in the delivery of its core programs and courses, despite the challenges. Indeed, COVID-19 introduced new safety issues for fishermen, issues which were a departure from the long-standing risks they typically deal with involving vessel stability, cold water immersion and the like. In this respect, once a 'new normal' was established in June 2020, and once Fish Safe had established its own COVID-19 operating protocols, we became the 'go-to' source for many fishermen who required help interpreting new public health orders, guidelines and best practices and tailoring them to their individual operations.

Throughout the pandemic thus far, at least for me, the word that comes to mind most often is 'versatility'. I've seen it in the vessel masters and their crews as they prepared to fish, and as they adjusted their way of working to safely accommodate an indiscriminate virus. I've seen it in our organization and in programs like the Safest Catch where the scope of what needed to be dealt with and taught from a health and safety perspective was broadened beyond anything originally envisioned for our programs.

# Financial Summary

April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021

“Fish Safe’s relationships with key stakeholders like WorkSafeBC and Transport Canada served to expedite communication and issue resolution while helping to maintain the operational continuity of the wild harvest fleet.”

And finally, I’ve seen it in my team, from our Program Coordinator and our small band of tenacious Safety Advisors who diligently met and worked with fishermen throughout the coast as conditions permitted, to our industrious in-house admin staff who willingly embraced the regular cleaning and sanitizing of our classroom and office space to help make our students and facilitators comfortable in a changed environment.

As we pause to reflect on the year that was, my thoughts are with everyone who has been touched by this pandemic, especially those who have lost loved ones, our first responders and the many who have lost employment, and other opportunities as a result. Here at Fish Safe, we look forward with hope to better times ahead, knowing there is valid reason for optimism.

To all, I thank you for your continuing commitment to safety even in unusual and uncertain times.



Ryan Ford  
Program Manager, Fish Safe

## SOURCE OF FUNDS:

WorkSafeBC Fishing Assessment Levy	\$ 400,000
DFO PICFI	50,000
Courses and Materials	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>460,000</b>

## USE OF FUNDS:

Prevention Programs	\$ 90,000
PICFI Program	50,000
Claims/Assessments	2,000
Administration	340,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>482,000</b>

## STAFF

Ryan Ford – Program Manager  
John Krgovich – Program Coordinator  
Stephanie Nguyen – Program Assistant  
Rhoda Huey – Bookkeeper / Program Assistant

## SAFEST CATCH ADVISORS

Ralph Roberts  
Harold Wulff  
Paul Bevandick  
Cheri Hansen

# Our Programs and Courses

Fish Safe's programs and services delivered during the year include the following:



## Safest Catch Program

Assists fishermen in developing a vessel-specific safety management system (and qualifies participants to receive Transport Canada certification for *Small non-pleasure Domestic Vessel Basic Safety (SDV-BS, formerly MED A3)* certification where needed.) Workshops and events support the delivery of this program.

## Small Vessel Compliance Program-Fishing (SVCP-F) 'Orange Decal' Program

Introduced in 2019 and integrated with the Safest Catch, fishermen can now extend the value of the Safest Catch program by gaining Transport Canada's SVCP-F orange decal in addition to the Safest Catch decal. The SVCP-F is a voluntary program for fishing vessels 15 GT and under.



## Vessel Stability Course

An internationally recognized, comprehensive 4-day course developed to identify and remove/minimize threats to vessel stability, a leading cause of loss of life while fishing.

## Vessel Stability Workshop

A 1-day workshop developed for fishermen working on small vessels, typically in sheltered waters, who are unable to commit to the full 4-day Stability course.

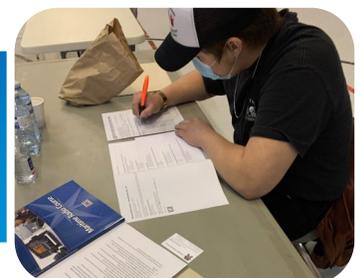


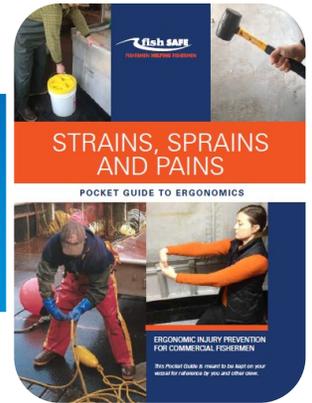
## Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP) Course

Mandatory training designed for the small boat skipper and/or other fishermen taking turns at the wheel of a fishing vessel. Participants receive necessary Transport Canada certification while receiving practical commercial fishing oriented training.

## ROC-M (Restricted Operator Certificate-Maritime) Course

A 1-day course, this is a Transport Canada certification requirement for virtually all fishermen – certification provided by the Canadian Power & Sail Squadron and focused upon the fundamentals of marine radio use.





**Ergonomic/Injury-Prevention Education**

Embedded within the Safest Catch, Safety Advisors provide and discuss a pocket guide developed by AMSEA (Alaska Marine Safety Education Assoc.) whereby fishermen are taught basic ergonomic concepts effective in helping to avoid injury.

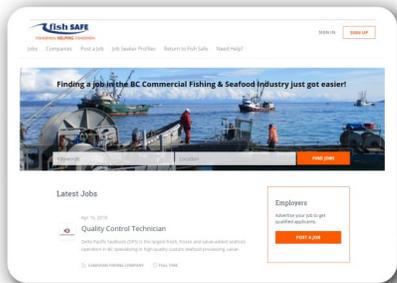


**Knots and Lines Workshop**

This one day workshop provides an overview of the different types of knots and lines that are commonly used on all fishing vessels, the safe handling of lines in general as well as how to safely tie up the vessel. This workshop is designed for new fishermen entering the industry and also serves as an effective refresher for others.

**Beachline Safety Workshop**

Held each summer just before the beginning of the salmon seine season. This hands on workshop teaches the fundamentals of beachline best practices, knot tying and safe release skills.



**Job Board**

Launched in early 2018, the Fish Safe Job Board allows both employers and job seekers to post open positions and worker profiles.

Fish Safe also remains closely attuned to the regulatory environment and the potential impacts of legislation on BC’s fishing industry by actively participating in Transport Canada’s national and regional CMAC (Canadian Marine Advisory Committee) that meets at least twice per year. Although last year’s sessions moved to an online venue, Fish Safe’s role continues to provide a close link between regulators and industry in areas involving vessel stability, vessel construction, safety equipment carriage requirements, manning regulations and the like.

Fish Safe’s role as conduit for industry is strongly supported by the Fish Safe Advisory Committee – a committee that enjoys broad representation from almost every facet of industry and regulatory bodies related to commercial fishing in BC. The Advisory Committee met twice last year via an online Zoom meeting venue.

# Year in Review

Course Summary	Fiscal 2021		Fiscal 2020		All Time	
	Courses	Participants	Courses	Participants	Courses	Participants
Stability	1	4	1	9	143	1189
SVOP	5	24	5	47	82	761
ROC-M (Radio)	2	12	11	60	82	717

Safest Catch Program Summary	Fiscal 2021	Fiscal 2020	All Time*
Vessel Visits	64	57	1,178
Participants	169	134	3,273
Emergency Procedures Manuals	0**	7	209
Decals	11	7	281
Orange decal - vessels impacted	8	27	75
Orange decal - participants	12	30	87

\* The Safest Catch program was launched in the 2009/2010 fiscal year

\*\* Funding for completing vessel emergency procedures manuals was not allocated in fiscal 2021

Safest Catch Activity By Vessel Gear Type	Safest Catch Vessel Visits
Trap & Longline	26%
Packing	6%
Seine	13%
Trawl	8%
Gillnet/Troll	41%
Dive	6%

# Safety Performance

Fish Safe’s overarching mandate is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in an inherently risky industry.

Data provided by the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) as well as WorkSafeBC (WSBC) are the primary source of statistics that assist Fish Safe in measuring its progress towards creating a sustainable safety culture.

The following table provides a snapshot of time-loss claims by gear type in recent years:



CLAIMS STATISTICS: 2014-2020 (only WorkSafeBC claims associated with wage loss are presented)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Dive	7	4	8	5	9	9	10
Trap & Longline	20	22	32	22	22	31	26
Trawl	38	36	37	26	41	39	34
Gillnet/Troll	10	11	20	17	25	20	19
Seine	4	3	6	11	17	12	9
Packing (includes farm fish)	3	3	4	4	8	7	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>107</b>
Deaths	2	1	1	1***	1**	3	2*

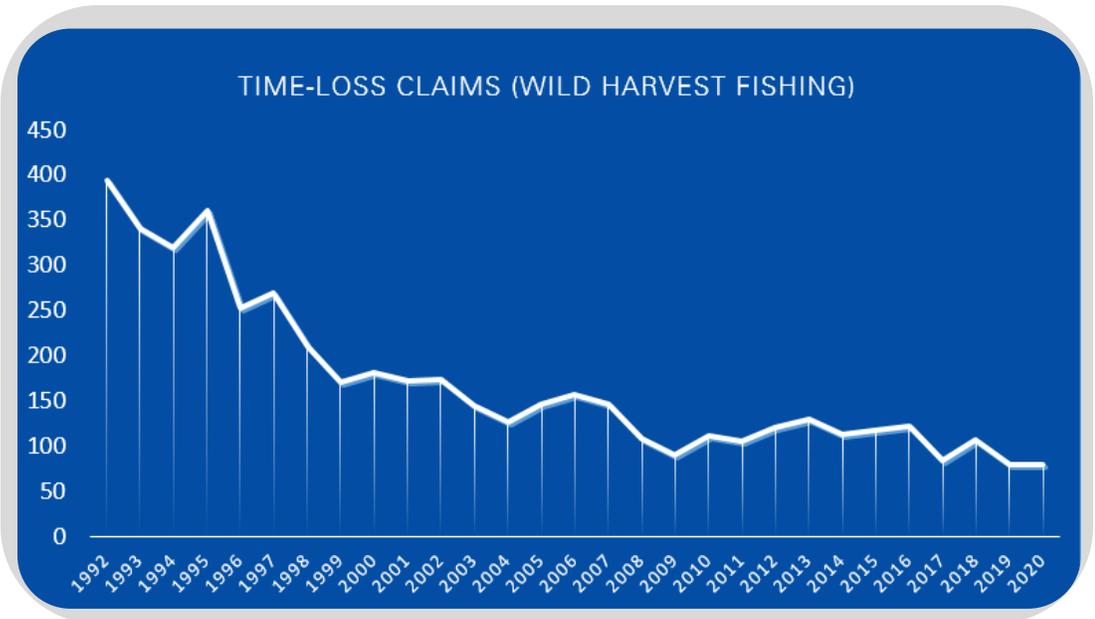
\* A total of 4 work-related deaths occurred in 2014. 2 deaths have been attributed to asbestos exposure and are not reflected in the table above.

\*\* One work-related death was recorded by WorkSafeBC in 2016 but applies to a 2015 incident.

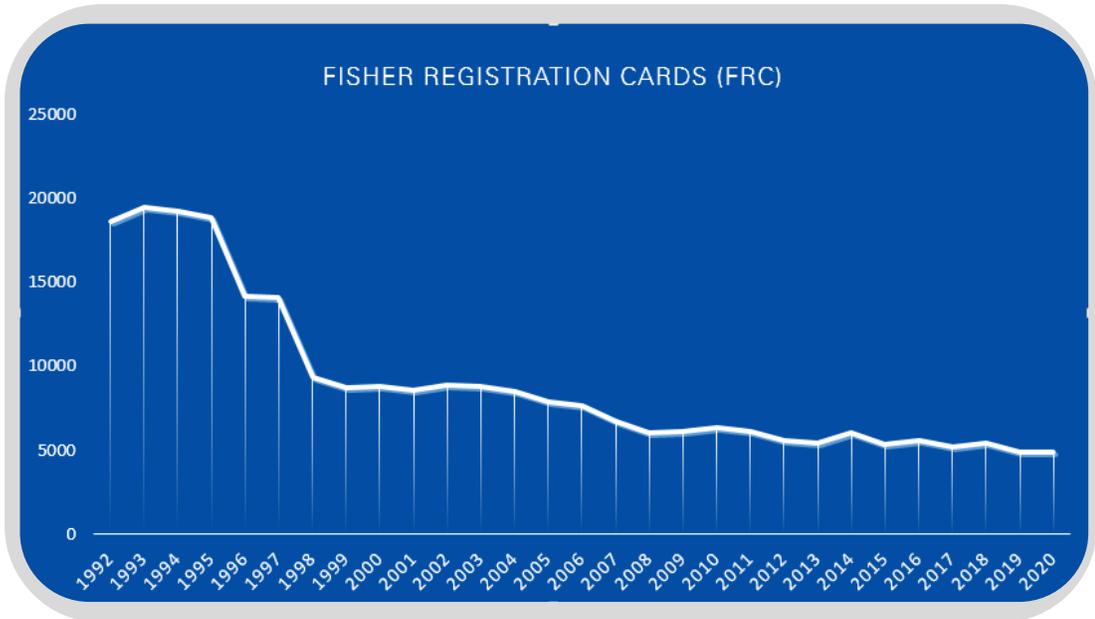
\*\*\* A total of 2 work-related deaths occurred in 2017. 1 death has been attributed to asbestos exposure and is not reflected in the table above.

Although only one element in a complex mechanism for setting WSBC assessment rates as paid by the BC seafood processors, an important driver of rates involves the measurement of annual time-loss claims.

As participation has declined in the BC commercial wild harvest industry, as measured by the annual count of DFO-issued Fisher Registration Cards (FRC), time-loss claims have similarly declined, as the following 2 tables illustrate:



(A total of 82 time-loss claims were accepted in 2020, and 79 in 2019.)

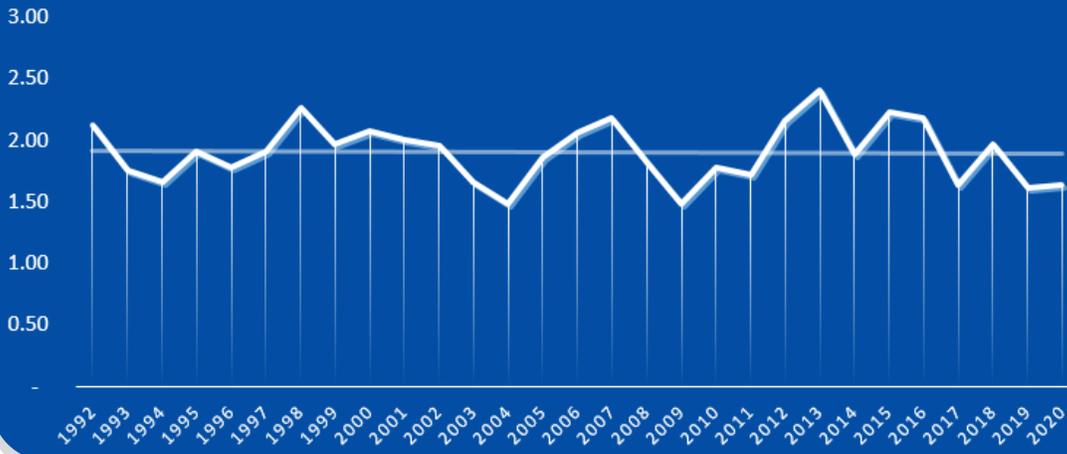


Fishing is currently still the only industry in BC for which WSBC does not calculate an injury rate, primarily due to the prevalence of 'catch share' remuneration practices where more traditional payment schemes (i.e. hourly and salary) are lacking.

However, a rate can be derived from a consistently available labour measure like the annual FRC count, which while not perfect, is an accepted method for calculating an injury rate in fishing.

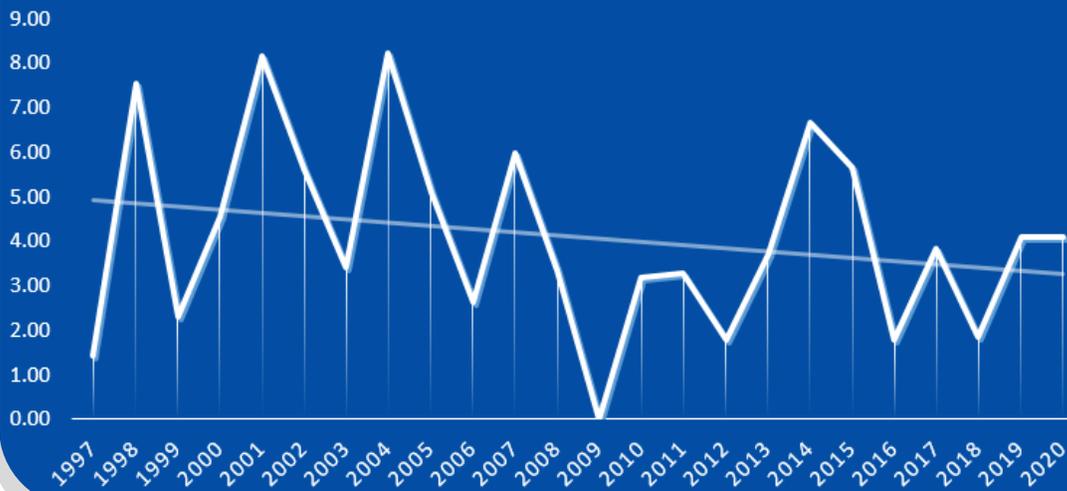
As the following table illustrates, over the past 10 years the time-loss rate per 100 fishermen has been 1.94 and since 1992 has followed a relatively flat trend-line. Interestingly, this injury rate is actually lower than the average injury rate for BC workers in all industries combined which is consistently more than 2 workers per 100 workers in the province.

TIME-LOSS CLAIMS PER 100 COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSES (WILD FISH HARVEST)



When we apply a similar measure against the number of deaths experienced in the fishing industry, but this time per 10,000 FRCs for greater statistical accuracy, an average of 3.67 fishermen per 10,000 FRCs is generated over the past 10 years.

DEATHS PER 10,000 FRCs (WILD FISH HARVEST)



Unfortunately, the rate of work-related deaths in fishing is still around 5-6 times higher than the average for BC workers in all industries combined. The encouraging news however, is that the fishing industry is seeing a clear down-trend in the fatality rate, as illustrated on the graph on the left.

Translating injuries, claims costs, payrolls, assessments collected as well as a host of other variables calculated over a lengthy, rolling 15-year window results in WSBC determining an assessment rate that the first buyers/processor of fish in BC pay on behalf of fish harvesters, as follows:

WorkSafeBC Assessment Rates	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Assessment Rate	7.19	6.42	6.48	6.39	6.81	6.50	6.86

\*2021: 7.19% (or \$7.19 per \$100) of assessable payroll

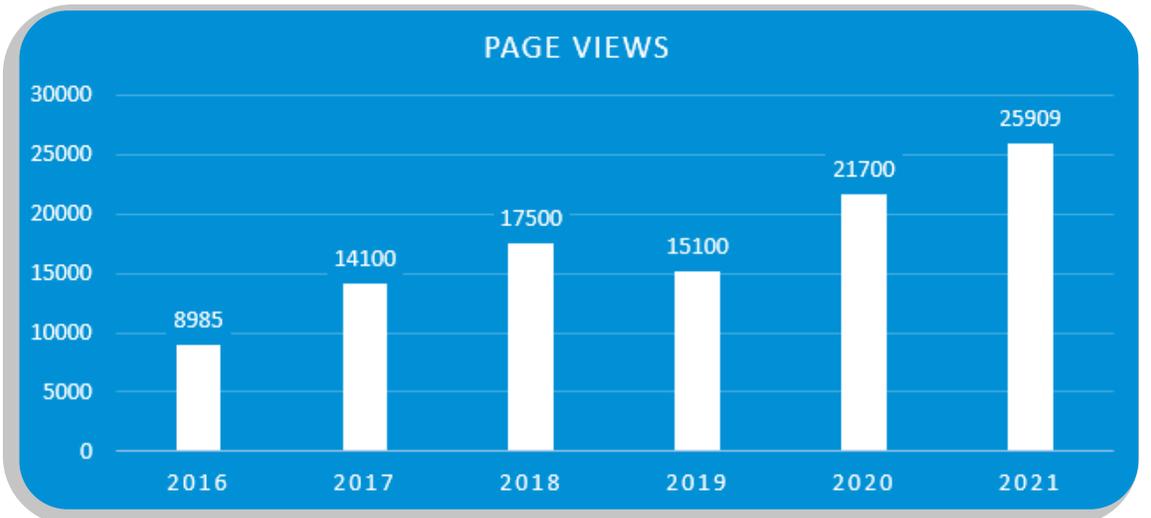
# Fish Safe Website

A website redesign in 2016 reinvigorated Fish Safe's digital strategy and provided a more effective platform for connecting with Fish Safe's audience of stakeholders.

In an environment of physical distancing, which came to define the prior year, the value of this strategy along with our E-marketing efforts was driven home.

Solid year-over-year increases in website traffic metrics, as illustrated in the accompanying tables, provide evidence that Fish Safe has built a loyal and growing audience.

Without question, updates related to COVID-19 including health and safety directives directly impacting fishing operations were among some of the most viewed posts during the past year.



# Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI)

Last year marked the 9th consecutive year of Fish Safe’s participation in the PICFI program, a federal program managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Launched in 2007 the program is designed to increase First Nations’ access to the commercial fisheries in BC.

Fish Safe’s role has been focused upon providing safety education to fishermen, both new to the industry and to those that are veteran fishermen. Essential Transport Canada required certification courses are being delivered by Fish Safe and include SDV-BS, Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP) and Restricted Operator Certificate-Marine (ROC-M) courses.

In early summer 2020, PICFI communities began to reopen from COVID-19 lockdowns and Fish Safe began its outreach activities - Fish Safe’s promise essentially was that once a PICFI community was ready, we’d be ready to help them with their training needs.

As the year progressed, and as infection levels began to accelerate during the winter, unpredictability became the norm rather than the exception. Extensive program delivery planned in Masset and Bella Bella in the months of February and March both cancelled on short-notice.

A snap-shot of fiscal 2018 - 2021 activity is provided here:

## PICFI Courses/Workshop Activity

	Fiscal 2021	Fiscal 2020	Fiscal 2019	Fiscal 2018
<b>1 Day Courses/Workshops</b> (MED A3, ROC-M, Safest Catch, Stability, Orange Decal and Knots & Lines workshop)	21	33	27	27
<b>4 Day Courses</b> (SVOP & Stability)	5	16	11	11
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	127	268	258	161





## Herring Outreach PFD Cartridge Replacement

Each year, the roe herring fishery in late February attracts a significant number of fishermen to the wharves along the eastern side of Vancouver Island, from Nanaimo to Campbell River. With both the gillnet and seine fleets participating, Fish Safe typically works the docks at this time of the year, helping fishermen to prepare for a safe fishery.

As we've worked with fishermen, especially in our Safest Catch program, we often observe inflatable PFDs that haven't received the maintenance they require – we see a lot of PFDs that indicate 'red' instead of 'green' and others that have deployed with cartridges that have never been replaced.

Also, more recently the TSB has reported on incidents where fatalities have occurred and inflatable PFDs *have* been worn, yet due to a lack of proper maintenance, they have failed to deploy. Furthermore, regulations set by both Transport Canada and WorkSafeBC compel vessel masters to ensure PFDs on board are inspected and maintained in a manner that will ensure successful performance in the event of an emergency.

“ Regulations set by both Transport Canada and WorkSafeBC require vessel masters to ensure PFDs on board are inspected and maintained in a manner that will ensure successful performance in the event of an emergency. ”



With this in mind, our outreach during this year's 2021 roe herring fishery focused on the need surrounding proper PFD maintenance and rearming inflatable PFDs where necessary. For commercial fishermen, we prepared to offer free rearming kits for some of the more popular inflatable PFD models currently in use.

Due to the public health orders surrounding COVID-19 at the time, we opted to rent a small recreational vehicle (RV) which allowed us to consolidate all of our materials in a mobile unit that also provided versatility for setting up at the wharf in a relatively safe, outdoor environment.

Over the course of several days our Program Coordinator, John Krgovich, visited the main wharves using the RV as a staging location. Doing so proved to be a real success as the RV was easily noticed and prompted many to wonder what we were up to. More importantly, the mobile, outdoor set up kept it comfortable for fishermen to approach while maintaining good physical distancing.

While at the docks we observed first hand that many fishermen struggle to rearm their inflatable PFDs. Some had never opened their PFD units to check on the condition of their CO2 cartridges, and as seen in the accompanying photo here, at least one PFD clearly indicated 'green', but was rusted to the point of being obsolete. Unfortunately, most fishermen rely on their PFD's green/red indicators, not realizing the false sense of security this can create.

Ultimately, over the course of five days Fish Safe provided over forty replacement PFD rearming kits. Of course we didn't have every conceivable rearming kit model on hand, but by being at the wharf many more fishermen were prompted to get their PFDs out and to ensure proper usability before the fishery began.



Commercial fishermen,  
**Fish Safe is here today!**

Has your Mustang PFD cartridge been used or has it expired?

Come see us for a **FREE** replacement!

Can't find us? Call 604-729-8407



# 2020-2021 Highlights







- **Fish Safe BC**  
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