



Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety National Communications Plan (2024)

Report to Congress
March 14, 2025



U.S. Coast Guard

Foreword

March 14, 2025

I am pleased to present the following report, “Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety National Communications Plan (2024),” prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018 directs the submission of a national communications plan for the purposes of disseminating information, conducting outreach, facilitating interaction, and releasing information collected under section 15102 of Title 46, United States Code, to the commercial fishing vessel industry.



Pursuant to Congressional requirements, this report is provided to the following members of Congress:

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Should you require additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 or House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin E. Lunday".

Kevin E. Lunday
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Acting Commandant



Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety National Communications Plan (2024)

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set forth in Section 830 of the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-282), which reads:

SEC 830: COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL SAFETY NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

(a) **REQUIREMENT FOR PLAN.** —Not later than one year after date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall develop and submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a national communications plan for the purposes of—

- (1) disseminating information to the commercial fishing vessel industry;
- (2) conducting outreach with the commercial fishing vessel industry;
- (3) facilitating interaction with the commercial fishing vessel industry; and
- (4) releasing information collected under section 15102 of title 46, United States Code, as added by this Act, to the commercial fishing vessel industry.

(b) **CONTENT.** —The plan required by subsection (a), and each annual update, shall—

- (1) identify staff, resources, and systems available to the Secretary to ensure the widest dissemination of information to the commercial fishing vessel industry;
- (2) include a means to document all communication and outreach conducted with the commercial fishing vessel industry; and
- (3) include a mechanism to measure effectiveness of such plan.

(c) **IMPLEMENTATION.** —Not later than one year after submission of the initial plan, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall implement the plan and shall at a minimum—

- (1) leverage Coast Guard staff, resources, and systems available;
- (2) monitor implementation nationwide to ensure adherence to plan contents;
- (3) allow each Captain of the Port to adopt the most effective strategy and means to communicate with commercial fishing vessel industry in that Captain of the Port Zone;
- (4) document communication and outreach; and
- (5) solicit feedback from the commercial fishing vessel industry.

(d) **REPORT AND UPDATES.** —The Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall—

- (1) submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report on the effectiveness of the plan to date and any updates to ensure maximum impact of the plan one year after the date of enactment of this Act, and every four years thereafter; and
- (2) include in such report input from individual Captains of the Port and any feedback received from the commercial fishing vessel industry.

II. Background

The commercial fishing industry ranges from small operators to large corporations, representing approximately 35,749 commercial fishing vessels and their crews throughout the United States and its territories. A robust communications plan is needed to ensure that important information is easily shared between the Coast Guard and the fishing industry. Information resources and methods of communication may differ from region to region. As such, the communications plan must support a variety of stakeholder needs.

Outreach is a mechanism the Coast Guard uses to relay information to the public, including marine-related industries. The Coast Guard often conducts outreach to advance targeted campaigns and initiatives. For example, personal flotation device (PFD) safety campaigns encourage mariners to use appropriate PFDs when working in potentially hazardous marine environments. Experienced Coast Guard District Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety (CFVS) Coordinators and field unit Fishing Vessel Safety Examiners coordinate, facilitate, and conduct outreach with the fishing industry and communities to disseminate information.

This report highlights the effectiveness and any significant updates to the March 6, 2020, CFVS National Communication Plan.

III. Report

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The CFVS National Communications Plan is implemented and sustained through structured information sharing between the Coast Guard and the public that is precise, timely, and reflects the appropriate geographic activity. The Coast Guard monitors communications plan developments through a reporting process managed by Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division (CG-CVC-3) and Coast Guard District CFVS Coordinators per CVC-PR-007 (series), Documentation Guidelines for the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety National Communications Plan.

MEASUREMENT

The Coast Guard is actively advancing initiatives that assess and provide trend analysis on the effectiveness of the CFVS National Communication Plan. Measurement factors include: public comment/suggestions via website, statistical data, trends, website engagement, long-range projections of communications targets, and satisfaction rates.

The Coast Guard has also developed a reporting tool that captures CFVS National Communication Plan data. The reportable data is maintained by the CG-CVC-3 staff, and Coast Guard District CFVS Coordinators are required to report relevant outreach and communication efforts from Coast Guard field units and the fishing industry within their area of responsibility (AOR) on a routine basis. Reporting expectations are outlined in CVC-PR-007 (series). After statistical data is reviewed, identified trends then inform planning decisions for the CFVS program.

Examples of current communication initiatives:

- The Coast Guard initiated a project to enhance existing website communication capabilities that will respond to and track stakeholder satisfaction, provide communication outage notices, and post information on training, regulations, and other fishing related activities.
- The Coast Guard is currently modernizing the Fishing Vessel Dockside Examination form (CG-5587) to: (1) include the Fish Safe website address, (2) provide fishing industry stakeholders access to the relevant resources, and (3) encourage participation in a customer satisfaction survey.

NATIONAL COMMERCIAL FISHING SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NCFSAC)

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 required new NCFSAC communication initiatives, which are currently in effect, including:

- Publishing NCFSAC agenda details of applicable committee meeting business to the public via the Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov>;
- Making NCFSAC Federal Register announcement public comment options accessible at <https://www.regulations.gov>;

- Developing a publicly accessible website that contains all information related to fishing industry activities, including vessel safety, inspections, enforcement, hazards, training, and regulations. The Coast Guard incorporated this as an agenda item and it was tasked during the fall 2023 NCFSAC meeting;
- NCFSAC reviewing marine casualties and investigations of commercial fishing industry vessels and communicating recommendations to the Secretary of Homeland Security to improve safety and reduce vessel casualties; and
- Posting of NCFSAC meeting minutes at <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/FishSafe>.

REPORT AND UPDATES

Several improvements to the CFVS National Communications Plan have been implemented since the original report resulting in improved communication effectiveness between the Coast Guard and fishing industry stakeholders. Key plan improvements and updates are as follows:

- Improved fishing industry access to information through Coast Guard website modernization;
- The 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 CFVS National Communications Plan report data reflects outreach efforts completed by each Captain of the Port (COTP) / Officer in Charge Marine Inspections (OCMI) unit within the various districts through a structured reporting/input process;
- Implementation of NCFSAC public meetings, agendas, and tasks via Federal Register public notices;
- Improved NCFSAC/fishing industry communication (input) through public meeting review of marine casualty investigations;
- The 2020, 2021, and 2022 Flag State Control Reports¹ provided a “snapshot” of CFVS activity for a specified year, and thus, is not all-encompassing;
- Standardized Reporting expectations via CVC-PR-007 (series), most recently updated in January 2024; and
- Released a public questionnaire/survey in 2024. The survey is accessible on the CG-CVC-3 Fish Safe website and will be included as an element of the Dockside Examination form (CG-5587).

EFFECTIVENESS

The CFVS National Communications Plan promotes a variety of mechanisms that enable information distribution between the Coast Guard and fishing industry. Information is also extracted from the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database and as provided by Coast Guard offices via CFVS National Communications Plan reporting measures. Measurable data allows the Coast Guard to monitor statistical information and trends, and as such, make decisions that may influence strategic planning initiatives.

¹ [Coast Guard Flag State Control Annual Reports website](#)

The following examples reflect the number of public interactions recorded for the associated websites²:

Coast Guard District 13 “Fish Safe West”

2020	8,123
2021	12,637
2022	11,537
2023 (Jan-Aug)	6,793
Total	39,090

Fishing Vessel “Check List Generator”

2020	7,696
2021	7,106
2022	10,062
2023 (Jan-Aug)	7,485
Total	32,349

It should be noted that the Coast Guard-managed, publicly accessible website³ (<https://www.dco.uscg.mil/FishSafe>) is hosted in the Department of Defense’s American Forces Public Information Management System, which does not permit tracking public visits due to system security restrictions.

Overall, the total CFVS National Communications Plan interactions include Coast Guard/public interactions such as dock-walks/exams, industry days, public interviews/correspondence, newsletters, and media. The data for Calendar Years 2020-2023 are as follows:

Year	Coast Guard/Public Interactions
2020	378,000
2021	290,000
2022	615,000
2023	223,093
Total	1,506,093

CFV Dockside Examinations completed and CFV Dockside Examination Decals issued in calendar years 2020-2023 are as follows:

Year	Examinations Completed	Decals Issued
2020	3,771	3,631
2021	4,752	4,648
2022	5,061	4,059
2023	5,846	4,637
Total	19,370	16,975

Note: Successful completion of a CFV Dockside Examination results in a CFV Dockside Examination Decal being issued.

² The Coast Guard can no longer track the number of public interactions recorded on the “fishsafewest” website. <http://www.fishsafewest.info>. Website interactions were last measured in August 2023.

³ <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/FishSafe>

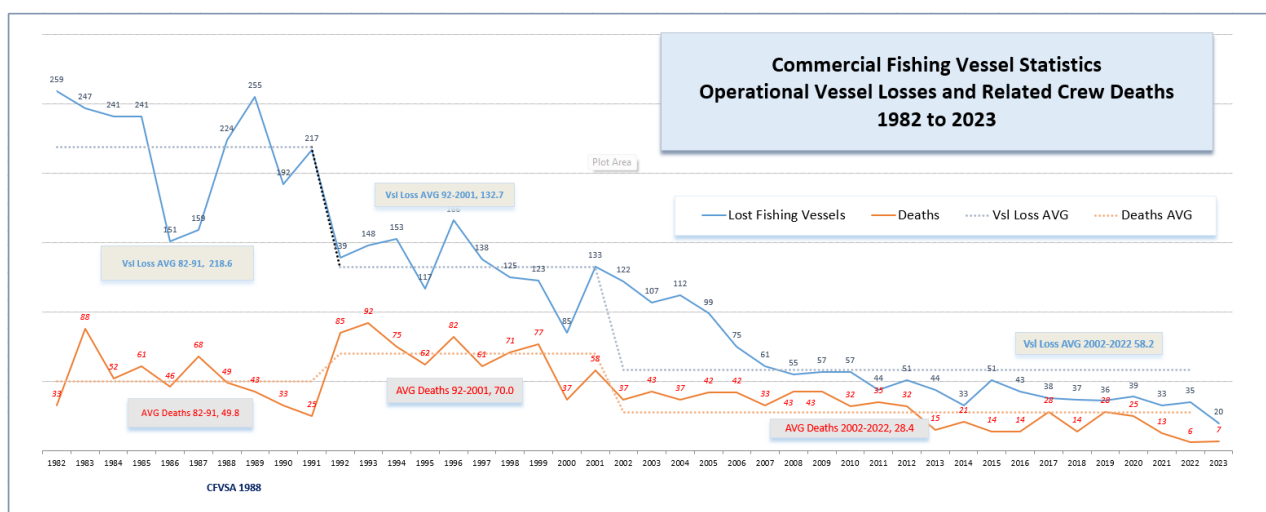
The NCFSAC met on two occasions in 2023 to conduct a series of meetings to review, discuss, and make recommendations to the Coast Guard on matters relating to marine investigation cases pertaining to CFVs. Both meetings were open to the public and encouraged public input to agenda initiatives. The Coast Guard is currently acting on NCFSAC feedback and recommendations on a variety of topics such as crew safety, falls overboard, mariner competencies, stability training, and publicly accessible website-communications.

NCFSAC PUBLIC MEETING	TASK TOPIC	# TASKS ASSIGNED
May 23-25, 2023; Norfolk, VA • Inaugural Meeting	Marine Casualty Investigations	3
Sept 26-28, 2023; Seattle, WA	Marine Casualty Investigations	10

CFV marine casualties that resulted in a total loss of a CFV, crew fatalities, and crew lives saved in calendar years 2020-2023 are as follows:

YEAR	TOTAL LOSS	FATALITIES	LIVES SAVED
2020	36	21	76
2021	52	6	86
2022	38	4	60
2023	20	7	39
Total	146	38	261

The chart below reflects a downward trend of CFV losses and crew fatalities. The reduction of marine casualties and fatalities has been influenced by enhanced safety initiatives and CFVS National Communications Plan components such as: the dockside examination program; fishing industry partnerships; media initiatives; targeted safety campaigns; and the promulgation of CFVS program policy and guidance.



IV. Conclusion

This report reflects several updates to the March 6, 2020, CFVS National Communication Plan Report to Congress, to include: COTP Plan implementation input, improvements with the NCF SAC, website modernization actions, focused outreach measures, and statistical data trends.

Advances in partnerships and information sharing between the Coast Guard and the fishing industry are reflected in numerous key metrics. Reports submitted to Coast Guard program managers by Coast Guard Fishing Vessel District Coordinators reflect large-scale impact with communications, outreach, and associated statistics. This improved reporting and communication has enabled Coast Guard leadership to analyze trends and influence strategic planning decisions that improve commercial fishing safety, with the aim to expand information sharing capabilities, improve mariner working conditions, and reduce the likelihood of marine casualties.

Appendix: Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definition
AOR	Area of Responsibility
COTP	Captain of the Port
CFV	Commercial Fishing Vessel
CFVS	Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety
CG-CVC-3	Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Fishing Vessel Safety Division
MISLE	Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement
NCFSAC	National Commercial Fishing Safety Advisory Committee
OCMI	Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection
PFD	Personal Flotation Device