

## Seafish Update

We are about to embark on the development, delivery and certification of a programme of voluntary training and information to fishermen covering:

- stability awareness
- basic safety (new entrant and refresher)
- bridge and engineroom watchkeeping
- risk assessment

It is widely recognised that a lack of knowledge of factors affecting the stability of fishing vessels results in a significant number of accidents, fatalities and vessel losses. A recent Safety Digest<sup>1</sup> published by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) focuses on stability and highlights a number of lessons to be learned from accidents caused by vessels becoming unstable.<sup>2</sup> Indeed various MAIB accident reports have drawn specific attention to this<sup>2</sup> and the report into the loss of the *Chelaris-J* contained a specific recommendation for the development of a training course. A 1-day course in fishing vessel **stability awareness** will help fishermen understand how day-to-day practices and operations can affect a vessel's stability, especially in unusual or extreme conditions. For maximum impact the course will be highly visual, making use of specialist computer graphics and model fishing vessels for demonstration purposes. This project will develop the syllabus, course delivery materials and equip all 15 industry-led Group Training Associations (GTAs) with the required demonstration equipment. Course delivery will further utilise the IT equipment provided to the GTAs under the first Fishermen's Safety Training project. Attendance on the course will be open to everyone and a delivery target of 920 training places per annum has been set.

Under existing basic safety training legislation<sup>3</sup>, there is no requirement for fishermen to undertake **refresher safety training**. Many fishermen (especially those who completed their basic safety training when the regulations first came in) have never had cause to put these skills into practice and have forgotten most of what they learned. Furthermore, procedures have changed and safety equipment has advanced. Fishermen need to be aware of these changes and given the opportunity to refresh their knowledge of what to do in the event of an emergency. This project will offer fishermen who undertook their basic safety training more than three years ago the opportunity to re-attend 1-day courses in sea survival, fire fighting and first aid. A delivery target of 400 fishermen/1,200 training places per annum has been set.

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<sup>1</sup> Safety Digest – Lessons from Marine Accident Reports 1/2004, pp. 27-48, Marine Accident Investigation Branch

<sup>2</sup> Charisma, Amber and Kirsteen Anne

<sup>3</sup> Fishing Vessels (Safety Training) Regulations 1989

The fishing industry is still struggling to recruit new entrants. The availability of funding under the first Fishermen's Safety Training project for **new entrant safety training** (sea survival, fire fighting, first aid and health & safety) has been a major boon for the industry. During the three years 2001-2003 an average of just over 800 new entrants per annum attended basic safety training and joined the fishing industry. Had the FIFG funding not been available, the majority of these would either not have joined the industry or would have joined and not attended basic safety training. The continuation of FIFG-funded new entrant safety training is therefore paramount for ensuring a continuing supply of "safe" new entrants to the industry, at a time when the rate of crew turnover is increasing. A delivery target of 840 new entrants/3,360 training places per annum has been set.

Existing legislation<sup>4</sup> only requires skippers on vessels of 16.5 metres registered length or more operating in the Limited Area to undertake training and hold a Certificate of Competency (ticket) issued by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). In its consultation document<sup>5</sup> the MCA proposes a number of changes to existing regulations for deck officers. These include the introduction of ticket requirements for skippers on vessels down to 10 metres registered length and a requirement that anyone who takes a bridge watch is qualified. Seafish is currently developing the syllabus of a 5-day **bridge watchkeeping** course for this qualification. This course will improve basic watchkeeping skills in the safe operation of fishing vessels and will act as a stepping stone for fishermen wanting to progress to higher qualifications. Funding is essential in order to encourage fishermen to voluntarily take up the new qualification and will serve to address a real shortage of qualified watchkeepers on fishing vessels. Whilst demand may initially be low, funding will also help to secure industry acceptance of the MCA's proposed change, which will make a significant contribution to improving safety in the fishing industry. Efforts will be made to ensure that the course can be delivered flexibly as either a 5-day course or a series of five 1-day courses. A delivery target of 320 fishermen/1,600 training places per annum has been set.

Current legislation also only requires engineers on vessels with engines of 750kW propulsive power or more to undertake training and hold a MCA Certificate of Competency (ticket). The MCA consultation document proposes the introduction of a requirement that anyone who takes an engineroom watch (on vessels over 750kW) is qualified. Seafish has already developed the syllabus for a 5-day **engineroom watchkeeping** course for this qualification. This course will improve basic engineering skills in the fishing industry and will act as a stepping stone for fishermen wanting to progress to higher qualifications. Funding is essential in order to encourage fishermen to voluntarily take up the new qualification and will serve to address a real shortage of qualified engineroom watchkeepers on fishing vessels. Whilst

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<sup>4</sup> Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations 1984

<sup>5</sup> Proposed improvements to and rationalisation of fishermen's training and certification requirements, 2004

demand may initially be low, funding will also help to secure industry acceptance of the MCA's proposed change, which will make a significant contribution to improving safety in the fishing industry. Efforts will be made to ensure that the course can be delivered flexibly as either a 5-day course or a series of five 1-day courses. A delivery target of 115 fishermen/575 training places per annum has been set.

The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997 require all vessel operators to carry out risk assessments and operators of vessels with more than five crew to have a written health and safety policy statement. Seafish, the industry's trade federations and the MCA have collaborated to produce a Fishing Vessel Safety Folder in order to help vessel operators comply with these regulations. However, there is clear evidence that additional help is needed, not just to complete the Folder, but also to ensure that the concepts of health and safety and risk assessment are understood and embraced. To avoid this process becoming simply a paper exercise, this project will provide vessel operators with "free" **risk assessment** advice and guidance from approved advisers on a vessel-by-vessel basis. This will require advisers going onboard vessels in port and spending 2-4 hours (depending on the size of the vessel) onboard with the owner/skipper and crew, discussing health and safety and risk assessment and assisting with the completion of the Fishing Vessel Safety Folder. A target of 425 vessels per annum has been set.

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**Update for SoSWG**  
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