

## WAFIC Safety Update – February 2025

(WAFIC Website: <https://www.wafic.org.au/what-we-do/access-sustainability/safety-and-training-information-02/>)

### **Make sure you Chat with your Crew About Safety – It's Law!**

Having conversations with your crew lets you gain first-hand knowledge and experience that will help build a healthy and safe workplace on your vessel.

Your crew will be much more engaged in the process if they understand the safety objectives and their ability to have input and their role in achieving these objectives. This makes everyone safer and can also foster trust in management and lead to improved productivity.

Consulting with workers and their representatives on health and safety matters is also a legal requirement under work health and safety laws. Given the importance of consultation in contributing to work health and safety, the [Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#) (WHS Act) prescribes a general duty on PCBU's to consult.

Consultation can occur in different ways depending on what suits your workplace and your workers. The best way to consult with your workers will depend on:

- the size of the business and how it is structured – *a single vessel or fleet operation*
- the way work is arranged and where your workers are located – *home port each day or away in remote areas for multiple days*
- what best suits your workers - *ask how they would like to be consulted*
- the complexity, frequency and urgency of the issues that require consultation.

Consultation is a collaborative process between the vessel owner or [person conducting a business and undertaking](#) (PCBU) and the master and crew. It involves allowing crew to raise issues, sharing information about work health and safety and ensuring that views of workers are considered when making decisions about health and safety for the vessel.

More info: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/consultation-and-worker-representation>

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### **New Worksafe WA Website Available**

The WorkSafe WA website is available to assist with your work health and safety needs!

Fishing and aquaculture have two sets of safety legislation to deal with:

- Maritime safety (via AMSA), and,
- Workplace safety (via Worksafe WA).

Whether you're looking for safety guidance or resources or reporting an incident the Worksafe website is designed to make it easier to find exactly what you need.

Go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/>

## Seafood Careers Australia

The shortage of skilled and experienced workers within the seafood industry has been an ongoing source of pain for many commercial seafood producers.

Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) in collaboration with FRDC developed an online employment and training platform, 'Seafood Careers' formally launched in July 2024.

Seafood Careers is a proactive step to address industry's ongoing workforce shortage by;

- Becoming a one-stop-shop for people interested in getting involved in the seafood industry, regardless of their experience levels.
- Better linking of job seekers with employers via an interactive map of Australia denoting key industry hubs and links to local employers
- Providing a directory of training opportunities and connecting people to career paths and employment advancement opportunities with Registered Training Organisations
- Showcasing the passion and love the people in this industry have for the work they do, and why it's a fulfilling industry to be a part of through video messaging.

The funding is now coming to a close but the legacy of this project will remain instrumental in building awareness and accessibility to careers within the seafood industry.

Highlights from the project:

- Website launch: [seafoodcareers.com.au](https://seafoodcareers.com.au) formally launched in July 2024, accompanied by an industry webinar with 25 attendees.
- Lead generation: Over 100 leads generated, including careers advisor groups, people creating courses, promotional events, individuals passionate about workforce development, communication networks; all designed to build a valuable database of contacts.
- Resource review: A desktop scan identified 250+ workforce development resources, including fact sheets, short courses, and schools content which were reviewed and assessed for inclusion on the platform.
- Courses and training: Over 125 courses linked to the platform - to name a few:
  - [Responsible oyster farmer training program](#)
  - [Digital skills hub \(Prawn farmers\)](#)
  - [Safety short courses \(AMSA recommended\)](#)
  - [Shellfish Safety Supervisors course](#)
  - [Sea Safe](#)
  - 30+ university courses
  - Various certificates
- Role descriptions: 119 comprehensive role descriptions published, covering all aspects of the seafood industry
  - including recreational, commercial, government, and research sectors.
  - with guides for expected salary, experience needed, recommended training and links through to currently advertised roles on Seek,
  - content designed to showcase the variety of roles available in the seafood industry.
- "Day in the Life" videos of people from all across the industry to create 45+ videos to pair with the myriad role descriptions so people looking at those roles can hear from someone actually doing them. The passion and enthusiasm in these videos is a credit to our industry.
- Events: Sponsored nine events in 2024, targeting industry members, school-aged children, university attendees, teachers, and career advisors, with over 3,000 attendees collectively.
  - [Fishing & Farming for the Future](#), [Seafood Directions](#), [Agricultural, Animal and Vet Sciences Careers Expo](#), [Australian Sea Country Conference](#) and the NSW [Careers Advisers Annual Conference](#).
- Teacher resources: Thanks to collaboration with some of the wonderful graduates from the National Seafood Industry Leadership program, we're uploading work experience,

excursion, and incursion opportunities to the website. These resources have been extremely popular with teachers and careers advisors.

- Website performance (as of January 2025)
  - Active users: 8,900, with 6,400 based in Australia.
  - Organic searches: 5,700
  - Direct searches: 5,700

If you'd like to explore the platform further, visit [Seafood Careers](#). We want to partner with you, so if you are attending events, have a course you've created or have some schools content ready for use, please reach out.

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## **Fishing Vessel Cyclone Contingency Plans Must be in Place**

With the first tropical cyclone forming off the North-West coast recently fishing companies are reminded to ensure that 'cyclone contingency plans' have been established and are in operation for your vessel and set out in your safety management system (SMS).

WorkSafe WA requires everyone on both sea and land needs to have safe systems of work in place when operating in a cyclone region.

Legislation requires employers to have adequate plans in place and must provide employees with appropriate training in emergency procedures to protect everyone in the workplace when a cyclone threatens. It's extremely important that everyone in a workplace knows exactly what they need to do in the event of a cyclone threat.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast an average number of tropical cyclones in the waters off the North-West coast this season but has added that there is a greater risk of cyclones being severe due to higher-than-average ocean temperatures.

Fishing vessels need to keep a list of sheltered anchorages and have information on how to use them, along with a specific action plan for each vessel depending on the distance from the cyclone and the safe harbour selected.

The Department of Transport has cyclone contingency plans for regional boat harbours along the WA coast. <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/inline/cyclone-community-information.asp>

Further information on cyclone contingency plans can be found on WorkSafe's website. <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/cyclone-emergency-preparation-planning-and-preparedness>

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## **Key things to know about Certificates of Survey (CoS)**

Unless exempt, domestic commercial vessels are required to have a certificate of survey to operate in Australia.

Certificates of survey are issued by AMSA to ensure that your vessel is compliant with national standards and allows your vessel to operate commercially in Australia.

Certificates of survey are normally valid for five years. AMSA will send you a reminder notice 90 days before your certificate expires and outline the surveys that are due to support the renewal application.

If you would like to learn more about your certificate of survey requirements or what steps to take for your vessel, information is available on:

- circumstances where your vessel may be exempt;
- how to change details on an existing certificate of survey;
- what to do if you would like to sell your vessel;
- cancelling certificates of survey or putting them on hold and more.

If you only want to update the certificate holders contact details (for example if you have changed address or telephone details), you can do this without submitting an application by calling [AMSA Connect](#).

You must notify AMSA within 14 days if the vessel is sold. The certificate can be transferred to a new certificate holder.

Whether you need to apply for a new certificate of survey, or renew, vary, suspend or revoke your existing one, AMSA has guidance available on their website to assist you. [https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/certificates-survey?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=general](https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/certificates-survey?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=general)

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## Everyone Has a Legal Duty of Care relating to Drugs and Alcohol

Everyone in the workplace has work health and safety duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a duty to protect workers from the risks associated with the use of alcohol and drugs.

As a PCBU, you must manage all health and safety risks and this might include setting specific policies for the use of drugs and alcohol.

So far as is reasonably practicable an owner must:

- ensure the health and safety of workers and others at your workplace;
- consult with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking and who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by a health and safety matter; and,
- consult cooperate and coordinate activities with all other relevant duty holders.

All workers have a legal duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and not adversely affect the safety of others.

- Workers must ensure they arrive at work:
- fit and well enough to do their job; and,
- not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs

There are a number of reasons why it is appropriate to develop a workplace policy on alcohol and other drugs:

- A PCBU could be found in breach of the general duty to provide a healthy and safe workplace that is free from hazards if injury or harm is suffered as a result of alcohol or other drug use.
- Having and applying an alcohol and drug policy demonstrates management commitment to a healthy and safe workplace.

- Having a clearly defined policy, with supporting procedures in place, will assist the PCBU to provide a safe workplace and manage drug and alcohol related issues in the workplace.
- The existence of a policy also provides a means of informing employees and other people at the workplace about what behaviour is acceptable in relation to alcohol and other drugs in your workplace.

If a person appears affected or impaired by alcohol or drugs, the PCBU has an obligation to make sure the person or any one else at the workplace is not put at risk.

- If a policy exists for this situation, it should be followed. In the absence of a policy, the PCBU should determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include making arrangements for the person to get home safely.
- It should not be assumed that any observed impairment is caused by alcohol and/or other drug use. Other impairment factors may include fatigue, medical conditions, chemicals, heat, noise and symptoms of work-related stress.

More information go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/duties-relating-drugs-and-alcohol>

For info on vaping in the workplace go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/vaping>

## **Confined Spaces – Safety Management on Vessels**

A confined space includes any enclosed or partially enclosed space that:

- is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person,
- is, or is designed or intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure while a person is in that space,
- is, or is likely to be, a risk because of the atmosphere, contaminants or smothered.

Confined spaces pose dangers because they are usually not designed to be areas where people work – engine rooms, freezers, anchor lockers, net storage areas. A confined space is determined by the hazards associated with specific circumstances and not just because work is performed in a small space.

Confined spaces often have poor ventilation, which allows hazardous atmospheres to develop quickly, especially if the space is small. The hazards are not always obvious and may change from one entry into the confined space to the next.

A person must be on standby to assist in the immediate vicinity outside the designated confined space preferably in direct communication with the person inside.

The risks of working in confined spaces include loss of consciousness, impairment, injury or death from:

- immediate effects of airborne contaminants
- fire or explosion from the ignition of flammable contaminants
- difficulty rescuing and treating an injured or unconscious person
- oxygen deficiency
- falls from a height
- environmental factors – eg extremes in temperature

- poor lighting
- poor communication and,
- manual handling.

Worksafe (WA) has guidance material on 'confined spaces to assist operators on how to manage the risks associated with confined spaces in the workplace.

Go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/publications/confined-spaces-code-practice>

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## **Sea Safe Program Unites Seafood Industry on Safety Approach**

The Sea Safe program is uniting the Australian seafood sector to tackle workplace fatalities and injuries, by improving safety in the fishing industry. Sea Safe is part of Seafood Industry Australia's National RD&E Seafood Industry Safety Initiative, which addresses research gaps in workplace health and safety in Australian fishing and aquaculture.

Launched in 2023, the Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) Sea Safe program - jointly funded by FRDC and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), is committed to ensuring '*Everybody comes home safe*'.

The program is intent on continuing transforming the improvements in safety culture within commercial fishing and aquaculture and focuses on sharing and learning to drive behaviour change for the 17,000 people working in these sectors.

The program has 37 official advocates from a range of different parts of the seafood business and more than 100 *Friends of Sea Safe* - people who have contributed or engaged with the program in some way.

Sea Safe aims to share real life knowledge and learnings from across the entire seafood value chain through a storytelling approach designed to support peer-to-peer learning and culture change, drawing inspiration from the successful *Stay Afloat* mental health program which has had a significant impact on the seafood sectors' wellbeing in recent years.

These stories, shared anonymously, cover a range of real world experiences - from how a CPAP machine was used to improve sleep-induced fatigue at work, to fishers surviving a 'man overboard' incident and how to prevent a similar event. By learning from each other's close calls and triumphs, seafood professionals can work together to significantly reduce accidents and injuries

Using Sense Maker, a technology platform, individuals can anonymously share safety stories – both positive and negative.

To share your safety story or to get involved in becoming a seafood safety advocate, contact Jo Marshall at SIA, mobile [+61 408 008 344](tel:+61408008344) or email [jo@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au](mailto:jo@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au), or visit the [Sea Safe website](#).

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## Company found Guilty of Failing to Maintain Safe Workplace

A Kalgoorlie engineering company has been fined \$685,000 (and ordered to pay \$21,413 in costs) over the death of a worker.

The company pleaded guilty to failing to provide and maintain a safe work environment and, by that failure, causing the death of the worker.

In March 2020, the worker was acting as spotter for another worker who was using a telehandler to move a large heavy metal frame structure weighing 648kg. The frame was not secured to the forks and the metal frame moved off the forks and fell onto the worker, inflicting fatal crush injuries

WorkSafe says the case should serve as a warning to all to have safe work procedures in place around mobile plant, especially if that plant is supporting a load.

The court heard that **neither of the workers involved in this incident had completed any specific training** with respect to exclusion zones.

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## AMSA General Exemptions to Expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

On 30 June 2025, the following National Law general exemptions will expire and will not be reissued:

- [Exemption 13 – Marine Safety \(Wildlife or other sightseeing\) Exemption 2020](#)
- [Exemption 18 – Marine safety \(Sail\) Exemption 2020](#)
- [Exemption 21 – Marine Safety \(Operator vehicular ferry-in-chains\) Exemption 2020](#)
- [Exemption 25 – Marine Safety \(Old certificates of competency—local restrictions\) Exemption 2020](#)
- [Exemption 33 – Marine Safety \(Sailing vessels with motor propulsion\) Exemption 2020](#)

These exemptions are no longer needed due to:

- the 2022 changes to Marine Order 505 (Certificates of Competency – national law) 2022 (MO505). Go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/about/regulations-and-standards/new-marine-order-505-certificates-competency-commencing-1-january>
- because arrangements can be appropriately managed through other National Law pathways such as compliance with general requirements or specific exemptions (SPEX).

Current exemption holders will need to take the necessary steps to prepare before the expiration date to avoid any disruption to operations.

AMSA commenced direct communication from 9 January 2025 to provide early visibility for exemption holders to be notified and to make necessary arrangements for the upcoming expiry of these exemptions.



As part of this advice process, exemption webpages have been updated and affected exemption holders will be contacted by direct email (where possible).

AMSA will also publish in their web news and include an article in Offshore Magazine.

For more detailed information please contact [regulation@amsa.gov.au](mailto:regulation@amsa.gov.au).

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## AMSA Launches Industry Education Campaign Re Changes to Marine Order 504

AMSA launched an education campaign in December 2024 to support industry uptake of new SMS requirements contained in Marine Order 504 which come into effect on 1 June 2025.

Marine Order 504 contains regulatory requirements for certificates of operation and operational requirements for marine safety including safety management systems, risk assessments and crewing requirements for Australian commercial vessels (DCVs).

Recently, Marine Order 504 underwent a review and public consultation process aimed at improving the safety outcomes of the SMS requirements and making them **easier to understand, fit for purpose and practical** for the diverse range of DCVs across Australia.

In-depth information, guidance and resources to help navigate and apply the following changes is available on the AMSA website at: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/changes-safety-management-system-requirements-1-june-2025>

Webinars will be held from February 2025 on the following topics:

- Fatigue management
- Changes to safety management system requirements
- Simplified SMS.

Register for the webinars at:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JbkUfSEpME2PL6ajwSRfbbJGXzkmezIjzNAFyM1VF5UN1RQTE1QMERRWEVXR0wwNUJEUzVGRk5TTCQIQCN0PWcu>

Key changes for industry to understand are:

- Introduction of a Simplified SMS — Owners of some vessels under 7.5 metres will be eligible for a simplified SMS. Use our online [simplified SMS tool](#) to find out if the simplified SMS applies to you.
- Fatigue management — Vessel owners will need to identify and address the risk of master and crew fatigue in the vessel's risk assessment. This does not apply to Class 4 vessels.
- Drug and alcohol policy — Vessel owners will need to have a drug and alcohol policy in the vessel's SMS to manage the risks associated with drug and alcohol use.
- Cargo and dangerous goods — Vessels undertaking cargo operations, including the carriage of dangerous goods, will need to include a procedure in their SMS outlining how they manage the specific risks.
- Key operational procedures to be covered in every SMS — Class 1, 2 and 3 vessel owners will need to have procedures covering the key vessel operations in their SMS, if relevant.
- Vessel emergency plans — Loss of propulsion and oil or fuel spills will need to be covered in the vessel's emergency plan, if relevant.
- Master and designated person responsibility statement — The master's responsibility and authority statement has been clarified to better outline their authority and there is



now a requirement to set out a designated person's responsibility statement. Different rules may apply to vessels eligible to operate under a simplified SMS in certain circumstances.

- Assembly station requirements — Alternative assembly stations will only be required if reasonably practicable based on the vessel's layout, characteristics and risk assessment. Different rules may apply to vessels eligible to operate under a simplified SMS.
- Record of vessel modifications — Vessel owners will need to identify risks to vessel stability in the vessel's risk assessment and maintain a record of vessel modifications impacting stability. This does not apply to Class 4 vessels and different rules may apply to vessels eligible to operate under a simplified SMS.

A range of guidance, tools and other resources are currently available to help implement the changes:

- Online simplified SMS tool — use this [simplified SMS tool](#) to check if you are eligible for the simplified SMS.
- Simplified SMS flowchart — download our printable flowchart to determine your eligibility for the simplified SMS.
- Guidance for developing:
  - Fatigue risk management plan
  - Drug and alcohol policy
  - Dangerous goods procedure
  - Stability risk assessment and recording vessel modifications.

Note: Over coming months more resources to help develop and implement a simplified SMS will become available.

*What should people do to prepare?*

Stakeholders should take the time to understand the changes and use the guidance and tools provided to prepare.

They can start updating their SMSs to include new requirements for fatigue, drug and alcohol policies, dangerous goods, and emergency plans now.

However, the simplified SMS and the updated assembly station requirements cannot be implemented early. Those [eligible for a simplified SMS](#) must keep following [current Marine Order 504 requirements](#) until 1 June 2025.

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## **How to Best Maintain your EPIRB**

Whether travelling by land, sea or air, a GPS-equipped distress beacon can mean all the difference in an emergency. It is important to ensure your beacon will work if you need it.

For 406MHz distress beacons, the battery expiry date is printed on the label. Periodically check the battery expiry date to ensure the beacon battery remains in-date. Beacon batteries last for approximately 5-10 years. Before your battery reaches its expiry date, you should consider the options to ensure that the beacon will transmit properly in an emergency situation.

In addition it is also important to check the beacon is functioning correctly. You can use its self-test switch. Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines to perform a self-test and for how often you should do this as over testing can drain the battery. Some manufacturers recommend testing your beacon once a month, or prior to a planned trip.

Keeping your registration details up to date helps search and rescue locate your beacon in the event of an emergency. Please keep your registration details up to date. Updating your registration is free and can be done online through the [registration system](#).

Go to: [https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/maintenance/index.asp?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=beacons](https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/maintenance/index.asp?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=beacons)

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## What Lifejacket is Right for Your Vessel?

No-one can predict what is going to happen at sea. Lifejackets are one of the most crucial pieces of equipment onboard any vessel.

Do you know what types of lifejackets are available and how they work (self-inflating, manual inflating or foam buoyancy lifejackets)?

Do you know the requirements by law for your vessel? What are the lifejacket requirements for your vessel class and operational area? If you operate in multiple operational areas, did you know you need to carry lifejackets required for your highest category of operation.

Have you done a risk assessment for lifejacket use on your vessel – what type to use, where they are stored, when will they be used. Have you trained your crew on these procedures and how to use a lifejacket. Go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/lifejacketriskassess>

How to maintain your lifejackets (especially re-gassing self-inflating models) and how to store lifejackets (for ease of access)?

AMSA has developed a one-stop shop for all this information on the website.

Go to: [https://www.amsa.gov.au/safety-navigation/safety-equipment/what-lifejacket-do-i-need?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=lifejacketsafety](https://www.amsa.gov.au/safety-navigation/safety-equipment/what-lifejacket-do-i-need?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=lifejacketsafety)

AMSA has worked with commercial fishers operating to develop examples to assist operators to update their risk assessment and develop a lifejacket wear procedure that suits their operation.

These examples have been developed for each specific fishery sectors (eg trawl, pot, net).

The details provided are for general information, and on the understanding that AMSA is not providing specific advice on a particular matter. All risk assessments and lifejacket wear procedures must be tailored to vessels, taking into consideration their specific operation.

To access the examples go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/lifejackets-fishing-vessels>

Two videos to assist with the messaging to industry have been developed along this theme:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVx03ZmDTfU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgwrrKEwqNs>

This lifejacket safety campaign is the beginning of a multi-year sustained safety initiative by AMSA to improve attitudes and safety practices around lifejacket wearing on the water.

Further information contact Steve Whitesmith, [Steve.Whitesmith@amsa.gov.au](mailto:Steve.Whitesmith@amsa.gov.au), 0408 976 282.

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## Guarding - Safety Management of Plant and Machinery

Manufacturers, designers and suppliers of machinery and equipment are legally required to make sure dangerous parts are safely guarded so that operators and others are protected from injury. Owners are also required to assess risk from machinery and guard where identified.

A guard may be any shield, cover, casing, physical or electronic barrier intended to prevent contact between a hazardous machine part and any part of a person or a person's clothing.

Older machinery is sometimes poorly guarded. Hazard areas may include extra moving parts like shafts, sprockets and pulleys that may have been added for various other uses.

Original guarding may have also been removed for maintenance and not put back. There may be times when an operator may need to reach over, under, around or into a machine while it is running. If so, any moving parts or other hazards must be appropriately guarded from human contact.

For detailed information go to: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/guarding> or [Code of practice - Managing risks of plant in the workplace](#)

Electric shock often results from people making contact with energised parts of damaged or faulty electrical equipment. RCDs cut the electricity supply instantly if a person touches a live part and receives a shock preventing serious injuries and fatalities.

While RCDs significantly reduce the risk of electric shock they do not provide protection in all circumstances. It is important to regularly check electrical equipment, cords and lights for damage and always use electrical equipment safely.

An appropriate RCD must be used, so far as is practicable, if electrical equipment is used in an environment that is likely to result in damage to the equipment or a reduction in its expected life span such as:

- is exposed to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust
- is moved between different locations where damage to the equipment or its cord could occur
- is frequently moved during its normal use
- forms part of, or is used in connection with, an amusement device.
- The exceptions to this requirement are if the supply of electricity to the electrical equipment:
  - does not exceed 50 volts alternating current
  - is direct current
  - is provided through an isolating transformer that provides at least an equivalent level of protection, or
  - is provided from a non-earthed socket outlet supplied by an isolated winding portable generator that provides at least an equivalent level of protection.

More info: <https://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/residual-current-devices-rlds>

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## Safe Embarking and Disembarking Your Vessel Is Essential

A contractor working on a vessel fell into the water whilst disembarking due to the gap between the wharf and the vessel. A safe means of access to the vessel was not provided.

The contractor was completing work on a vessel alongside a wharf and was preparing to disembark with a tool bag. There was a one metre gap between the vessel and the wharf, and no means of safe access was in place.

The contractor leaned over the side of the vessel to place a heavy tool bag on the wharf, with the straps of the bag wrapped around their arm. While the contractor was stretching across, the tool bag fell from the wharf. The contractor's arm had become trapped by the tool bag handles, and they were dragged over the side and into the water.

The contractor managed to free their arm and surfaced. They then swam to the stern of the vessel and climbed onboard.

The above example shows how a lack of safe access can rapidly escalate into a life-threatening incident. The risk is increased by any weight being carried by the person and the likelihood of striking their head or limbs between the wharf and vessel on their way into the water.

Under AMSA's national maritime safety law, **the owner and master are responsible** for ensuring safety for all people, including contractors, boarding a domestic commercial vessel. In addition to the marine safety law, workplace health and safety regulations require that the risk of falls in general needs to be addressed including falls when boarding and disembarking a vessel.

The means of access to and from the vessel should be risk assessed and covered by a procedure as part of the vessel's safety management system.

Further information: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/safe-access-to-domestic-commercial-vessels>

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## Who is Responsible for Emergency Procedures Planning and Testing Procedures

Under WA work health and safety legislation, the person conducting a business or undertaking **must ensure that there is an emergency plan in place** to protect anyone on the premises in the event of an emergency.

Emergency plans procedures must be developed in consultation with workers – master, crew and shore based support.

In developing a plan, consideration should be given to the range of potential emergencies that could plausibly affect the workplace.

The following is a [brief checklist](#) of the requirements for the person who has control of a vessel or control of the access to or egress from a vessel:

- An emergency plan for a vessel should be in your safety management system and include:
  - a risk assessment and development of agreed emergency procedures,
  - testing of the emergency procedures with all crew
  - information, training and instruction to relevant workers in implementing emergency procedures, including use of emergency equipment.
- Procedures to cover locating persons on the vessel during emergency procedures, notifying emergency services, medical treatment and effective communication.

- **Ensure emergency procedures are practised on the vessel at reasonable intervals during a season, especially when new crew join the vessel.**
  - The procedures should allow people to safely move within the vessel and passages for the purposes of movement are always kept free of obstructions.
  - Lifejackets are provided, maintained and crew trained in their use.
  - Fire extinguishers should be located and distributed in accordance with Australian Standard, AS 2444-2001: Portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets in galleys.
  - Training is provided on all emergency procedures and safety equipment to all people who will be required to help manage the emergency – on the vessel and onshore.
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## **Worksafe WA to Review Man Overboard Code of Practice**

Worksafe WA has indicated that they will soon commence the formation of a steering committee to review and update the Code of Practice for Man Overboard for the commercial fishing, pearling and aquaculture industries under the auspices of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

The existing Section 53 *Man Overboard CoP* was initially developed in 2010. [Code of practice - Man overboard: prevention and response](#).

The Code needs to be reviewed and updated given the introduction of the new WA WHS legislation in March 2022. The existing Code is a guideline only but can be referred to in court proceedings.

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## **Seafood Industry Australia - Safety & Wellbeing Committee**

The Australian peak seafood industry body, *Seafood Industry Australia*, has established a national *Safety & Wellbeing Committee (SWC)* to provide strategic direction and leadership to pursue a safer wild-catch, aquaculture and post-harvest seafood industry.

Several WA industry representatives, including WAFIC, have been appointed to the Safety & Wellbeing Committee together with representatives from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

SWC will consider safety, training, wellbeing and workforce issues impacting the Australian seafood industry and advise the SIA board and CEO on appropriate actions.

The SWC is aiming at continuous improvement towards zero fatalities and reduction in workplace safety incidences through continuous cultural improvements in the use of workplace safety management systems, an increase in uptake of workplace safety and training programs and education tools. Importantly SWC will establish broad industry stakeholder engagement and best practice to inform and lead industry input to decision-making at government regulatory level.

The Safety and Wellbeing committee will work towards minimization of harm both physically and psychosocially in the wild-catch, aquaculture and post-harvest sectors. This will be measured through increased roll out and uptake of Sea Safe, ongoing engagement in consultations of any proposed regulatory changes, engaging in discussions around compliance and educational tools for industry support and progressing recommendations where required.

The SWC will actively develop and make recommendations on commercial impacts for policy developments in terms of safety and wellbeing related to international conventions and domestic Governments.

Contact Jacky Cartwright - [Safety@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au](mailto:Safety@seafoodindustryaustralia.com.au)

## WA Memorial for Lives Lost at Sea

A small group of volunteers wants to highlight the bravery of, and sacrifices made by, WA's commercial fishing fleet.

*The WA Fishers Lost at Sea Memorial Association (FlatSea)* has come up with a pretty amazing idea about how to do that. They originally thought about some kind of a statue but it really didn't feel like it was doing justice to what people went through. (Go to: <https://www.flatsea.org/>)

So they started investigating some more engaging and interactive options for the memorial and came upon an interesting concept in the Croatian city of Zadar where, when walking along the foreshore you will hear a gentle melody that reminds you of voices carried over water.

The hauntingly beautiful sounds are created by a sea organ constructed by the water's edge with the sounds are generated when the gentle swell pushes air through a series of pipes. It is one of the world's biggest musical instruments and is a triumph of art and engineering.

FlatSea organisers reckon a 'sea organ' would be a perfect tribute to the hundreds of souls who have been lost at sea while pulling pots, lines and nets along the WA coast - a giant, naturally powered musical instrument filling the beachside air with notes from the ocean.

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## Safe Work Australia – Draft model Code of Practice for Managing Fatigue.

Safe Work Australia is developing a model Code of Practice which provides guidance for managing fatigue risks at work. <https://consult.swa.gov.au/model-code-of-practice-fatigue>

This draft model Code of Practice has been developed with the support of the Safe Work Australia members (ie all the Ministers for WHS from each state).

Given the recent discussions on fatigue management within Australian Safety Management Authority (AMSA) it is important that the fishing industry pushes to ensure consistency across all the various fatigue management guidelines.

A person in charge of a business must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their physical and psychological health and safety, **including the risk from fatigue.**

To meet your duties to ensure health and safety, you must eliminate or minimise fatigue and its associated risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

This draft model CoP is proposed to be a practical guide to meet WHS regulations and general safety duties. If approved by Safe Work Australia Members (Commonwealth, state and territory WHS ministers) it will become a model Code of Practice in each of these jurisdictions.

It is expected this process will be finalised in the first half of 2025. To have effect in a jurisdiction, a model Code of Practice must be approved as a code of practice by the WHS Minister in that jurisdiction.

Codes of practice are admissible in court proceedings under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations. Courts may regard a code of practice as evidence of what is known about a hazard, risk, risk assessment or risk control and may rely on the code in determining what is reasonably practicable in the circumstances to which the code of practice relates.



WAFIC will be working with other fishing industry peak bodies to formally respond by the closing date for comments of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

This draft CoP appears to stop short of mandating hours of rest, as being considered by AMSA. Rather, it outlines situations where risk of fatigue is increased, therefore requiring management attention to those situations.

Measures to manage the risks associated with fatigue will vary from one workplace to the next, depending on the nature of the work, environmental conditions and individual factors.

The risks associated with fatigue can be managed by following a systematic process which involves:

- identifying the factors which may cause fatigue in the workplace
- if necessary, assessing the risks of injury from fatigue
- controlling risks by implementing the most effective control measures reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and
- reviewing control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

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## **Fatigue Management – What is It?**

Fatigue is more than feeling tired and drowsy.

In a work context, fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion which reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively. It can occur because of prolonged mental or physical activity, sleep loss and/or disruption of the internal body clock.

Fatigue can be caused by factors which may be work related, non-work related or a combination of both and can accumulate over time.

Everyone in the workplace has a work health and safety duty and can help to ensure fatigue does not create a risk to health and safety at work.

Fatigue can adversely affect safety at the workplace. Fatigue reduces alertness which may lead to errors and an increase in incidents and injuries, particularly when:

- operating fixed or mobile plant, including driving vehicles
- undertaking critical tasks that require a high level of concentration
- undertaking night or shift work when a person would ordinarily be sleeping.

The longer term health effects of fatigue can include:

- heart disease
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- gastrointestinal disorders
- lower fertility
- anxiety
- depression.

SafeWork Australia has created a Guide to provide practical assistance for persons in charge of a business or undertaking on how to manage fatigue to ensure it does not contribute to health and safety [risks](#) in the workplace and workplaces covered by most Work Health and Safety Acts.

It is not designed to provide information on managing fatigue in specific industries and does not replace requirements related to fatigue under other laws.

Go to: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risk-fatigue-work>



## Marine Safety Incidents – January 2025

To see all incidents reports go to: [https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/incident-reporting/2024-monthly-domestic-commercial-vessel-incident-reports?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=monthly-marine-incidents#msdyntrid=Z7gjhSXOebAKgx\\_Wne-EiYnIPERx4lvT0GjcbhwOck](https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/incident-reporting/2024-monthly-domestic-commercial-vessel-incident-reports?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=monthly-marine-incidents#msdyntrid=Z7gjhSXOebAKgx_Wne-EiYnIPERx4lvT0GjcbhwOck)

AMSA has also summarised various incidents and outlined findings and recommendations to provide other vessel owners and operators with the opportunity to learn from marine safety incidents that have taken place.

Go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/marine-incident-reporting/monthly-safety-lessons-domestic>

To submit an incident report to AMSA go to: <https://www.amsa.gov.au/form19>

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## Safety is Everyone's Business

All employers and employees should regularly re-commit to building a safe and healthy workplace on your fishing vessel or aquaculture operation.

*Safety is Everyone's Business* and highlights the need for owners, masters, crew and shore support personnel to come together and exchange ideas to build healthy and safe workplace.

A health and safety audit of your fishing or aquaculture operation is a good place to start to help you on your way to making safety your business.

A safety audit is nothing more than taking the time to check your health and safety performance by comparing how you currently operate with your agreed safety management system. You can do this yourself, or better still, ask your crew or another vessel owner to help – use a fresh set of eyes.

This audit will highlight any gaps you may have between how you are operating and what you had previously agreed would be done – for example:

- Inductions for new crew members / Continuous training for existing crew.
- Practising emergency procedures with all crew
  - man overboard,
  - abandon ship / sinking vessel,
  - fire management,
  - injury management.
- When to use lifejackets during the fishing operation
- Ensuring guards on winches and pulleys and proper training for operation

This will help to come up with actionable steps to improve your fishing business' safety.

If you don't have a safety management system, go to <https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/safety-management-systems/templates-safety-management>

Most health and safety audits can follow a step process.

### **1. Decide how often to audit**

- Choosing how often to audit will depend on the size of your operation and if your work environment is continuously changing (such as an aquaculture site).
- Some timings are decided for you, for example a vessel survey or AMSA inspection is carried out or during the off season.
- Your safety management system should outline how often you need to audit different areas.
- You should then schedule them out for the year ahead and send out a copy to keep everyone in the loop.

## **2. Identify areas to audit**

- It's important that your audit doesn't try to do everything at once.
- Make a note of each area of your operation. Some will be simple processes – coming alongside the wharf. Others will be more complex – setting trawl gear.
- You may also agree to set benchmarks and standards and ensure everyone working aboard and onshore agrees.

## **3. Conduct the audit**

- Each audit will look different depending on the fishing vessel operation or aquaculture site.
- You may test equipment or ask staff to explain a process and compare their response to what's written in the SMS to assess competency and/or potential training shortfalls.
- You can:
  - Start with a general chat
  - Carry out on-board observations during a walk-around the vessel
  - Discuss results, agree on changes or improvements, decide what's important and create an action plan with two categories:
    - Non-compliance – you have found a breach of a requirement and action is required to fix any non-compliant issues.
    - Opportunity for Improvement — a suggestion for making a change that could lead to a better outcome, but it's not compulsory.'

## **AMSA Quick Links for Vessel Safety Responsibilities**

AMSA has provided a quick link for owners or operators of a domestic commercial vessel, including fishing vessels, to understand their responsibilities under the Regulations.

There are a number of practicalities you need to consider, including keeping your vessel and crew trained, safe and compliant.

Go to: [https://www.amsa.gov.au/audiences/domestic-commercial-vessel-owner-or-operator?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=general](https://www.amsa.gov.au/audiences/domestic-commercial-vessel-owner-or-operator?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=general)

Safety Management Systems: [https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/safety-management-systems?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=general](https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/domestic-commercial-vessels/safety-management-systems?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=general)

## **Stay Safe: Replace your Float-Free EPIRB Hydrostatic Release Regularly**

Float-free emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) are vital for maritime safety.

In the event of an emergency and when a float-free EPIRB is submerged in the water, it automatically activates and sends your location to the AMSA Response Centre.

For these devices to work when you need them most, 2 critical components must be in top condition:

- **The battery:** EPIRB batteries have a limited lifespan and must be checked regularly to ensure they are in-date and functional.
- **The hydrostatic release unit (HRU):** HRUs must be replaced within 2 years of installation, unless the manufacturer specifies otherwise. This unit is crucial for the EPIRB's deployment in an emergency.

In an emergency, you want your float-free EPIRB to activate reliably. Ensure you regularly maintain and replace the HRU on their float-free EPIRBs.

For info on float-free EPIRBs go to: [https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/about/float-free-epirbs.asp?utm\\_source=amsa-update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=FF-EPIRB](https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/about/float-free-epirbs.asp?utm_source=amsa-update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=FF-EPIRB)

## What Happens During an AMSA Vessel Inspection?

Marine inspectors perform inspections on behalf of AMSA - both planned and unscheduled checking as to whether the vessel meets requirements to ensure safety of persons, the vessel and the environment. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lvhY-ebv80>

The marine safety inspector aims to complete the inspection in a timely manner with minimal disruption to your operation as can reasonably be expected. To assist, a vessel owner should be ready with:

- A safe means of access that allows 3 points of contact while boarding and disembarking,
- Your vessel safety management system and evidence to show how you have implemented that SMS on your vessel,
- All relevant documentation readily available, including your Certificate of Operation, Certificate of Survey, your master and crew tickets and any exemptions relevant to your vessel.
- All required firefighting, lifesaving and on-board equipment is on-board and working - if not, then at least marked appropriately and demonstrate plans are in place to repair/replace the equipment.

Before the start of an inspection, the marine safety inspector will give you a letter indicating that your vessel will be inspected and clearly explain the scope of the inspection and any equipment that may need to be operationally tested. While on your vessel, they will check for compliance against legislated requirements and may use a checklist to inspect areas or items such as documentation and certificates, your safety management system, safety equipment and the overall condition of the vessel. During the inspection, marine safety inspectors may take notes, photographs or videos as necessary.

You will be provided with a report at the time of inspection or be sent a copy within 5 business days and this is a record of the inspection containing details of the inspector's findings and recommendations. To ensure the consistency, transparency, accountability, impartiality and fairness in decision-making, all decisions and the reasoning behind these decisions will be explained at the end of the inspection.

If non-compliance was found during inspection, the marine safety inspector may use a range of actions to address them depending on the circumstances. Actions are proportionate with the associated risk identified and include (in order of severity):

- engagement and education
- advice and warnings
- direction notices
- improvement notices

- prohibition notices
- detention

Should you have feedback or concerns relating to the conduct of an inspection, the letter given at the start of the inspection provides information on how to contact AMSA.

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## **Planned Maintenance - Important for Safe Operations – Mandatory Requirement.**

Planned maintenance is essential on domestic commercial vessels. Good maintenance work in port or at anchor can help avoid breakdowns and getting into hazardous situations at sea. Recent incidents have demonstrated the potentially serious consequences of a lack of effective maintenance that can pose serious risks to the safe and operation of vessels.

Analysis of 117 incident investigations since 2020 found that maintenance problems were a factor in 28% of incidents, including **half (50%) of very serious incidents** and 27% of serious incidents.

Under the National Law for Domestic Commercial Vessels, Marine Order 504 sets out:

- The vessel **must have** a Safety Management System (SMS).
- The owner of a vessel **must ensure** that a system of regular programmed inspection and maintenance appropriate for the vessel, its machinery and its equipment is developed, maintained and implemented.
- The SMS **must include** arrangements for recording details of each inspection and correcting each deficiency identified by an inspection. The record may be kept in the logbook.
- The vessel **must be inspected** sufficiently to determine if the vessel, its machinery and its equipment complies with the maintenance and operation requirements that apply to it. This requirement does not prevent inspections being made for compliance with voluntary maintenance guidelines.
- The vessel **must be serviced** taking into account the manufacturer's specifications and requirements.

Under Marine Order 503, it is a condition of a Certificate of Survey that a certificate of currency relating to equipment **must be** carried on the vessel **must be kept current**.

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## **Safety Management System – You Must Have One – By Law!**

**All domestic commercial vessels must have a safety management system (SMS).**

This SMS will demonstrate and document how your vessel meets the '**mandatory**' general safety duties.

Your vessel's SMS should be based on a risk assessment of your operations. It should describe how safety, maintenance and operation is managed on your vessel.

A safety management system is not just a document – you must put it into practice, Train your employees, do practical emergency drills and document that you have done so.

The owner, operator, master, and crew of each vessel must be involved in developing and reviewing the risk assessment.

AMSA has a range of tools and resources to help you develop and assess the health of your safety management system (*clicks links underlined*):

- *Guidelines for a safety management system* - this guide provides information, checklists and templates that can guide you through developing or revising your own SMS.
- *How to develop a safety management system* - an online step by step guide through the process of developing your SMS.
- *Templates for a safety management system* - useful templates are available for you to download.
- *Risk management in the national system* - a practical guide on identifying hazards, conducting a risk assessment, implementing control measures and reviewing risks as part of your safety management system.
- *Emergency procedures flipchart* - ideas for developing and writing emergency procedures.
- *Crewing guidelines* - appropriate crewing must be determined by the owner as a part of their general safety duties and should be documented as a part of the vessels SMS.
- *Fishing for safety video* - watch this 16 minute video for easy to understand steps, real-world stories and experiences of why an effective SMS is essential.
- *Planned maintenance* - learn about the importance of maintenance plans and what to include in yours.