



# Fisheries Management and Safety at Sea of Commercial Fishers

Presentation to the Standing Committee on Quebec Fishing Vessel Safety

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## Presentation Outline

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## Introduction

- The safety at sea of commercial fishers is a collective responsibility that Fisheries and Oceans Canada shares with concerned stakeholders :
  - ❖ Transport Canada
  - ❖ Canadian Coast Guard
  - ❖ Commercial Fishers



## Roles and Responsibilities

- Under the *Fisheries Act* and associated regulations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Fisheries Management Branch is responsible for managing, protecting and conserving Canada's fisheries resources



## Fisheries Management and Safety at Sea

DFO notes that some management measures can have an important impact on safety fishery operations. For example :

- Opening of fishing seasons, especially in adverse weather conditions
- Removal of gear from the water without regard for weather conditions

It is important that safety-related questions be brought up at advisory committee meetings and discussed along with management measures. The proper experts should provide their expertise in order to minimize the risks.

DFO Fisheries Management managers are not certified experts in navigation or safety at sea.



## Safety-Related Initiatives

To date, great progress has been made in several fisheries with regard to safety, following close communication with the industry. For example:

- In several fishing areas, rules were implemented to delay the opening of the spring season when winds exceed 20–25 knots (Lobster Fishing Area 22, etc.)
- After rules were implemented, some fleets were given an increase in the maximum size of their vessels (e.g. traditional crabbers in areas 12 and 16 Group A)



## Safety-Related Initiatives

- Maintain ongoing relations at different levels with CCG, TC, the TSB and other regulatory agencies
- Create a regional fishing vessel safety committee to discuss regional issues (The QC committee is a good example on a national scale)
- DFO is opened to modify policies and rules if safety at sea is concerned.



## Memorandum of Understanding Between DFO and TC

- On November 6, 2006, DFO and TC signed a MOU on the safety at sea for commercial fishers
- In this MOU, both parties committed to work together very closely on safety issues
- In a recent review, TC and DFO reiterated these commitments
- Both departments are currently working on revising the MOU





## Letter of Agreement Between DFO and TC

- On August 30, 2011, DFO and TC signed a letter of agreement on information sharing
- This letter follows the *Memorandum of Understanding to Promote Safety at Sea for Commercial Fishers*
- The purpose of this letter of agreement is to promote the sharing of DFO information on fishing vessels for safety, education, compliance monitoring, investigative and legal purposes



## Conclusion

- The safety at sea of commercial fishers is a collective responsibility
- Regulatory agencies continue to work together to target and resolve safety issues
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada acknowledges that it has a role to play in the safety at sea of fishers, but DFO is not an authority on the matter.
- The collaboration with stakeholders is therefore mandatory.