



SAFE WORK PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

Every harvester doing their part in flattening the curve can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the fishing industry. The purpose of this safe work practice is to educate harvesters about COVID-19, their risk of exposure to the COVID-19 illness and control measures that can eliminate and prevent transmission of the disease.

The vessel owner/captain has a responsibility to exercise every reasonable precaution to provide a healthy and safe work environment and ensure the health and safety of every person they employ is protected while they are working. The vessel owner/captain is also responsible to ensure that crew members are provided with adequate information, instruction, and facilities to safeguard against workplace hazards. The vessel owner/captain must also ensure the health & safety of contract workers not employed by the vessel owner/captain (ex. mechanics, fuel delivery services, bait delivery, buyers).

COVID-19 is a worldwide pandemic, placing great impacts on many essential operations such as the fishing industry. The Government of Nova Scotia has included the fishing industry as an essential service. Risks associated to COVID-19 can be mitigated through each person doing their part in reducing the spread & flattening the curve.

Due to the close working conditions of the fishing industry, physical distancing is not always possible. Harvesters are encouraged to review this Safe Work Practice with all crew regularly.

COVID-19 - THE FACTS

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can affect your lungs and airways and is caused by the novel coronavirus. COVID-19 is extremely contagious. Consequently, anyone who comes into contact with the virus is at high risk of becoming infected.
- COVID-19 spreads easily, mostly through person-to-person contact but also by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.
- The virus can be spread through indirect contact when the respiratory droplets from an infected person lands on surfaces. It can be transmitted when individuals touch those surfaces with their hands and then touch their mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.
- All persons are at risk of contracting COVID-19. People who are infected with COVID-19 may have little or no symptoms as symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. Some may display no symptoms but can still be contagious.
- Symptoms include but are not limited to: cough, fever and difficulty breathing.

SAFE WORK PRACTICE - DOCUMENT NOTICE

Information & recommendations for the prevention of COVID-19 change daily. Information provided in this document may change as information updates from government sources. The information provided in this Safe Work Practice directed to the Nova Scotia fishing industry is presented as a recommendation to assist in reducing the risk of transmission.

Please note that given the limited space on board most inshore fishing vessels, if a crew member on your vessel has COVID-19, it will be difficult to contain transmission of the virus to the rest of the crew.



REDUCING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

1) Limiting visitors on your vessel

- The vessel owner/captain must give permission to anyone wishing to board the vessel.

2) Screen all visitors and crew

- The vessel owner/captain must screen all visitors & crew wishing to board the vessel.
- The temperature of each person boarding should be taken.
- The vessel owner/captain should ask questions such as;
 - *Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19 including a cough, fever or difficulty breathing?*
 - *Have you been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who shows symptoms of COVID-19?*
 - *Have you been in close personal contact with anyone who has entered the province of Nova Scotia within the last 14 days?*
- Any person that answers 'yes' to any of the above questions should not be given permission to board the vessel. The vessel owner/captain should advise this person to return home to self isolate for 14 days, monitor their symptoms and contact 811.

3) Physical Distancing

- Non-crew members such as; fish buyers, bait delivery personnel, fuel delivery personnel, enforcement agencies and all other non-crew member visitors to your vessel must practice physical distancing by remaining a minimum of 2 metres / 1 fathom / 6 feet from all vessel crew members.
- Captain & crew members may not always be able to physically distance on smaller inshore vessels and in some cases, larger vessels. To help reduce the risk of transmission all crew should ensure that tools, gloves, clothing, personal items and food are not shared. If items must be shared, ensure they are cleaned & disinfected immediately. Avoid shaking hands or other common human to human interaction.
- When it is possible, captain & crew members should make their best effort to physically distance.

4) On-board hygiene

- Captains & crew should reference the document provided by FSANS titled "Vessel Cleaning Practices" for detailed cleaning & disinfection information.
- Captain & crew must ensure hands are washed frequently, for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Ensure all high touch areas such as; ships wheel, VHF radio, banding table, galley and head are cleaned & disinfected daily.
- Ensure all items used for cleaning are disposed of properly. Place paper towels, rags and cloths into garbage bags.

5) Accommodations & meal prep/consumption

- Ensure that sleeping accommodations are never shared and cleaned daily. Do not share linens, pillows or other clothing.
- Shared food items such as salt & pepper, coffee cream, mustard, ketchup, butter should be removed and placed into individual containers labeled for each crew members own use.
- Ensure cooking and prep areas are cleaned before, during and after meal preparations.
- Ensure all cutlery, plates & cups are properly cleaned before & after each use.



REDUCING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

6) What to do if a crew member becomes ill

- Crew members are responsible to self-monitor their health before boarding the vessel. Crew members should notify the vessel owner/captain immediately if they start to feel ill with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Based on the condition of the crew member and their symptoms, determine if emergency response is necessary.
- Whenever possible, the ill crew member should be isolated from the rest of the crew to decrease the person-to-person transmission of the virus. When doing this, isolate the ill crew member where possible to the sleeping area (bunks), monitor them (from a safe distance) and provide food, water, tissues and other necessary supplies.
- Clean all shared spaces regularly, especially the head (washroom).
- Place all personnel items belonging to the ill crew member into a garbage bag and store it away from all others (bedding, clothing, towels etc.). Ensure gloves are worn for this process.
- Take all reasonable precautions to keep a minimum of 2 metres / 1 fathom / 6 feet away from the ill crew member.

2) What to do when the vessel docks with a ill crew member

- If the crew member does not have their own transportation, arrange for a vehicle to be dropped off and waiting for them at the wharf. Limit their contact with others.
- The ill crew member must immediately go straight home & self isolate for 14 days.
- The ill crew member must contact 811 and follow their instruction.
- Captain & remaining crew members should clean & disinfect the entire vessel.
- Captain & crew must monitor their symptoms, and also self isolate for 14 days.
- If other crew members become ill or display symptoms, contact 811.
- Workplace illnesses must be reported to the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia as soon as possible.

SAFE WORK PRACTICE REVIEW

1) If any crew member becomes ill with symptoms related to COVID-19, they should not be permitted aboard the vessel prior to departure.

2) If any crew member becomes ill with symptoms during your fishing trip, follow the steps as outlined in this Safe Work Practice and contact appropriate health officials. All crew should self isolate once the vessel is docked & monitor for symptoms.

3) If you are unsure of the symptoms, or other information related to COVID-19 please contact 811 or visit www.novascotia.ca for the most recent information on the virus.

4) This document was created for use of harvesters in Nova Scotia and is intended to be used as a guided reference only.

5) This document was created by the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia with sourced information from of our safety partner the Newfoundland & Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association, as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia.

If vessel owners, captains or crew have questions or unresolved safety issues you can contact the NS Dept. of Labour Safety Division by calling 1-800-952-2687.