

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY 04-110

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Science and Technology

NOAA Fisheries Observer Safety

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I. Introduction

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) trains and oversees the training of hundreds of fisheries observers annually. These observers are deployed on fishing vessels under the authority of the Magnuson- Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other marine resource laws. Regional observer programs have developed safety training standards in coordination with the National Observer Program (NOP), the National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT), and the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association. As a result of establishing training standards for observer trainers, NOAA Fisheries will improve safety training, ensure consistency across regional observer programs, and increase observers' level of risk awareness, ability to respond to an emergency, and chances of survival at sea.

II. Objective

It is the intent of NOAA Fisheries to ensure that consistent safety training is provided to all fisheries observers, and that this training adheres to minimum national standards that NOAA Fisheries has determined critical for preparing observers for the hazards associated with commercial fishing operations.

III. Authorities and Responsibilities

This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

The National Observer Program

The National Observer Program will coordinate with all regional observer programs to ensure the safety training standards are kept current and are met.

Regional Observer Programs

Regional observer programs will develop and implement training programs, which prepare observers for the working environment of their regional fisheries. Each Region will monitor their training programs to ensure that the established safety standards are met, and that any safety issues unique to the Region or fishery observed are addressed.

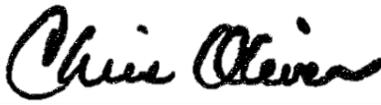
IV. Measuring Effectiveness

NOAA Fisheries recognizes that in some programs, additional safety topics are taught that further enhance risk awareness and safety skills that may be more specific to certain regions or fisheries. Therefore, in addition to the required demonstration of competency in certain safety skills, each program will make a determination as to what additional performance standards an observer must meet to successfully complete safety training.

Each regional observer program will monitor the effectiveness of these requirements by 1) ensuring established safety training standards are met during training, and 2) surveying/debriefing returning observers to assess if the training provided was adequate to prepare them for their actual work experiences. Any deviations from established standards and any identified needs for new standards will be reported to the NOPAT at each scheduled meeting. The NOPAT or its designee, will compile all regional information into one annual report to monitor and measure effectiveness at a national level.

V. References

National Marine Fisheries Service Procedure 04-110-01, NOAA Fisheries Observer Safety Training Standards

Signed  _____ 9/26/2018
Chris Oliver Date
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries