

# RISK ASSESSMENT FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING TRIPS

Before a commercial fishing trip, the owner or operator can complete this assessment, assigning each element a numerical value of 1-5, with 5 being the highest risk. The assessment is used to identify high-risk elements. Then, steps should be taken to reduce risk in those elements and for the trip overall.

ELEMENT	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RISK VALUE
TRAINING	Level of safety training of crew. Classroom vs. hands on training. Prior training from other sources. Monthly, thorough drills conducted.	
CREW EXPERIENCE	Amount of experience among individual crew. Do crew have substantial fishing/boat experience and skills? Age of crew and level of physical fitness. USCG License? Stability training? Drill Conductor certified?	
OPERATOR EXPERIENCE	Does the captain/operator have a background and experience in this type of fishery and this type of vessel?	
LOCATION	How remote are the fishing grounds? How far is help if needed both from Coast Guard and other resources? What risks are presented by the locations (currents, windy passages, bar crossings, distance from shelter in case of rough weather)?	
WEATHER	How dangerous is the predicted weather or weather typical for this time of year? How will this impact the trip?	
EQUIPMENT	Do vessel and crew have proper safety equipment such as liferaft, immersion suits, EPIRB, dewatering pump, personal PFDs for deck work, bilge/fire alarms etc. and redundancy? Gear within certification? Dockside exam sticker within last year?	
COMPLEXITY	What is the overall complexity of the fishing operation? Length of trip, crew fatigue, crew size, complicating variables, size of operational area, economic limitations, competitiveness of fishery etc.	
HULL/GEAR	Hull integrity, recent survey/classification, general condition of hull, gear & machinery. Recent changes/weight affecting stability?	
Total:		

A score of 7-12 is low risk; 13-23 requires caution; 24-35 is high risk. Use similar score breakdowns if certain elements are given greater weight than others. Identify elements or areas that require special emphasis. **To lower overall risk due to a high-risk category you do not have control over, look for ways to lower risks in another category that you do have control over.**

**The following situations override the above risk assessment and vessel SHOULD NOT LEAVE PORT:**

1. Storm forecast
2. Hull integrity problems.
3. Expired and or damaged or missing safety/survival equipment.
4. Power plant(s) and machinery not fully operational.
5. Insufficient fuel, food, or other necessary supplies.



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