

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Formation of a Safety Association for the Fishing Industry**

#### **Who is part of the safety association?**

The four Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) related to fishing: Salt Water Fishing, Inland Fishing, Fish Products, and Services Incidental to Fishing (including Aquaculture). There are nearly 1300 companies/individual firms within these four SIC's.

#### **Are there other industry safety associations in Nova Scotia?**

Yes. A number of industry safety associations have been formed in Nova Scotia. Safety Associations have been formed for Trucking, Forestry, Construction, Retail Gasoline and Automotive Dealers. Health Care has also formed a safety association, AwareNS.

#### **Have they been successful?**

Yes. These associations have had great success in reducing accidents/injuries in their respective industry, which is reflective in their workers' compensation premiums. As an example, an industry such as Forestry, which is similar in nature to the fishing industry, has been able to reduce their WCB assessment rates by 40% in a five year window.

#### **What's the process for setting up a safety association?**

The current system for setting up a safety association in Nova Scotia is to make application to the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (WCBNS).

Since the responsibility to provide prevention services respecting occupational health and safety was transferred from the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Learning (DOLAE) (formerly NS Department of Labour and Workforce Development) there is no longer the need to establish an Order-in-Council.

However, still, the industry must be defined as to which SIC's the safety association will cover; it must be stated the percentage in favour or opposed to the establishment; its objectives need to be described as well as how they would be achieved; and the funding mechanism needs to be established.

In the current system, several existing safety associations use a "levy" system (a percentage of WCBNS premiums paid). The funding mechanism is not limited to the levy system and other options can be

considered, such as a membership fee, as long as there is an established basis for calculation and to lay out the process. If the concept is approved, the WCBNS is to collect funds from firms in the SICs and make payment to the specified association. Annual reports must be provided on the activities of the safety association.

**How long will it take to see a reduction in the WCBNS assessment rates?**

Generally it takes 3-5 years to influence a significant change in the rates: Three years for an individual company’s experience rating, and five years for the industry rate. So, with a safety association formed today, it will likely take a few years to see the rates change. Subsequently, the association has the ability to analyze accident costs and trends which will help to predict if the rates will fall within the 3-5 year window.

**What if the industry does nothing and doesn’t move to form a safety association?**

Rates in the fishing industry have continued to rise. Based on trending, rates will see an increase if an intervention is not done. The WCB predicts the following:

SIC’s	2009 Rate	2014 rate	% Increase
Salt Water Fishing	7.48	8.87	18%
Fish Processing	5.19	6.67	28%
Aquaculture/Services Incidental to Fishing	4.18	4.47	7%

Annual WCBNS premiums currently total nearly 17 million dollars. If industry, through the FSANS is able to reduce the number of accidents/injuries and related costs by 10%, the industry would realize a saving of over 1.5 million dollars each year.

**Why should industry pay for the Fisheries Safety Association of NS? Why doesn’t the WCB of NS pay for it?**

The WCBNS is funded 100% by employers. If the WCBNS pays for the FSANS, employers would essentially still be paying for it.

**Has industry been consulted on forming a safety association?**

Discussion on this subject began in 2004 with the processing sector. The group commissioned a study entitled “Study of Accident Costs in the Fish Processing Sector” which detailed and identified key issues around the nature and causes of work related injuries/accidents. The

study identified why the number of workers' compensation claims exceeding \$5K has increased so dramatically since the mid 90's and identified suggested recommendations in order to reduce accidents/injuries. Strategic planning sessions were held with the industry in order to find solutions to reducing workplace accidents/injuries. There was consensus that industry is ready to tackle issues related to safety and escalating workers' compensation rates on an industry-wide basis. An advisory group investigated the safety association model. There was support by industry for a safety association. Due to financial constraints of the industry, the advisory group was unable to gain consensus on a levy funded model at this time.

In 2007, a group of harvesting and aquaculture industry representatives formed a committee to explore accidents and injuries in their respective sectors. A baseline study was completed by the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council (NSFSC); similar to the processing sector, which captured information regarding accidents and injuries in the sectors. A number of key issues were identified, along with recommendations for industry to consider.

In the spring of 2008, these recommendations were presented to the harvesting and aquaculture sector for their consideration. A full mail out to all firms in the respective sectors was conducted. Information sessions were held across the province. There was consensus from those that participated that, industry should work together to combat this issue, reduce accidents and injuries and essentially reduce workers' compensation premiums.

An advisory committee was formed in 2008 by those interested in addressing this issue. Membership in this committee has been open to anyone with a keen interest in reducing workplace accidents/injuries. A safety strategy was developed which provided options for industry to consider. These were in the area of governance, structure, mandate, objectives, functions, activities and funding of the safety association. A mail out was conducted in the fall of 2008 to all registered firms in the fishing industry. This information was communicated through a newsletter which also requested participation and feedback to province-wide consultation sessions. Information sessions were also held in conjunction with industry meetings, and ongoing discussions around this topic have been had with a number of stakeholders.

### **What is the mandate of the Fisheries Safety Association of NS?**

The FSANS mandate relates directly to enhancing safety; making the industry more attractive for new employees and keeping the existing employees safe and healthy. The Association's work will result in a reduction of accidents/injuries, along with workers' compensation rates for the fishing industry.

### **What is the objective of the Fisheries Safety Association of NS?**

The objectives of the safety association are:

- ❖ To facilitate a change process to create safer workplaces, assisting return to work and injury prevention activities
- ❖ To develop and provide tools to help reduce the number (frequency) and duration (severity) of injuries occurring in the fishing industry
- ❖ To increase awareness of the costs associated with workplace injuries in the fishing industry

### **What type of functions does the FSANS have?**

The Association will focus its efforts on prevention education, advocacy, communication and awareness. This will be achieved by the conducting the following functions:

#### Prevention Education

- Implementation of an accident prevention strategy for the fishing industry.
- Industry-specific education programs on accident investigation, preventing workplace injuries, ergonomics, etc.
- Undertake concrete activities that are of direct interest to industry and that have the potential to positively affect WCBNS rates. This can be in the form of developing educational tools.

#### Advocacy

- The FSANS has the capacity to undertake research on causes of escalating rates. Research can also be done on the economic impacts resulting from continually increasing costs that make the Nova Scotia fishing industry.
- Continued dialogue with WCBNS and Government.
- Work with the WCBNS as part of their strategy with Doctor's Nova Scotia and the Physiotherapy contract. Educate the medical community. Address issues in relation to wait times for specialist service, diagnostics and surgeries.
- Work with all stakeholders that have a keen interest in improving workplace safety.

### Communication and Awareness

- Demonstrate industry-wide leadership on the issue of safety.
- Increase awareness of safety and celebrate the successes of members in all sectors.
- Promote a “safety culture” in the industry.
- The FSANS has the means to communicate with industry on causes of loss incidents, and specific activities that can address these.

### **How is the Fisheries Safety Association of NS governed?**

The FSANS is governed by a Board of Directors that meets quarterly, and oversees the activities and staff of the safety association. The 15-member Board is comprised of 5 harvesting representatives, 5 processing representatives, 3 representatives from aquaculture and/or services incidental to fishing, and 2 seats for the NSFSC. Ex-officio members (non-voting) offer perspective and guidance from the DOLAE, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, WCBNS and Transport Canada.

An Executive Committee is elected by the Board of directors. The executive may meet independently of the Board, as needed.

There is also an open membership of the safety association, to those firms/individuals in the harvesting, processing and aquaculture sectors registered with the WCBNS. An Annual General Meeting is held, to which all members are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in the matters of the FSANS.

### **What type of structure does the FSANS have?**

The Association is housed within the NSFSC. The FSANS has a dedicated staff person – the Executive Director – to manage the safety association, but shares the office resources of the NSFSC.

### **What type of funding structure does the FSANS have?**

An annual membership fee is charged to each company/firm within the represented SICs:

SIC	Description
311	Salt Water Fishing Industry
312	Inland Fishing Industry
321	Services Incidental to Fishing (including Aquaculture)
1021	Fish Products Industry (including Processing)

If a company holds more than one division within an SIC they will pay only once (i.e. 2 processing plants within an SIC). However, if a company has divisions in 2 or more SICs they will pay in both SICs (i.e. one harvesting, one processing). The WCBNS will charge this fee on behalf of the FSANS to the company/firm and turn over the revenue to the Association. The membership fee will be based on the previous year's WCBNS premium paid:

Premium paid (previous year)	Membership Fee (current year)
0-\$1000	\$50/year
\$1001-\$2000	\$100/year
\$2001 and above	\$200/year

New companies entering the system will pay \$50 for the first year and subsequent years would be based on previous year's premium paid.

### **What are the activities of the Fisheries Safety Association?**

- ❖ The FSANS has a full-time employee available for consultation on all health and safety related matters;
- ❖ It acts as a safety advocate for the fisheries industry;
- ❖ Communication and awareness within the industry and beyond as required;
- ❖ Programming for employers around accident/injury causation, trends, prevention strategies, cost abatement, etc.;
- ❖ Development of industry-specific training, safety promotion materials, and presentations;
- ❖ Negotiate safety related training at a reduced rate for its members;
- ❖ Secure agreements with suppliers of safety gear, equipment and services to provide discounted prices for FSANS members.

### **What's next?**

- ❖ Listen:
  - Seek out member input and feedback. Respond promptly to enquiries and concerns voiced by members.
  - Find "good news" stories and successes that can be communicated broadly.
  - Identify true Champions that will put a "face" to fisheries safety.
- ❖ Learn:
  - Site visits, tours, trips and excursions to meet with members in all sectors of the industry to better understand specific issues and needs.



- Review WCBNS and DOLAE data to identify trends and opportunities to create inventions and measures to prevent injuries and exposure to unacceptable risk.
- ❖ Cooperate:
  - Work with all sector-specific groups, associations, coalitions, etc. in the interest of promoting improvements in health and safety. Work toward common goals and objectives.
- ❖ Speak:
  - Promote the existence and activities of the FSANS to the broad fisheries community.
  - Continue communication with members via newsletters, the association website [www.fisherinessafety.ca](http://www.fisherinessafety.ca), etc.
- ❖ Be heard:
  - Keep the NS public, government departments, and elected officials apprised of the existence of the FSANS and its activities. Secure testimonials and letters of support.
- ❖ Sharpen the Hook:
  - Create an industry-wide “safety culture” that will make it second-nature to identify and implement measures to:
    - **Control Hazards**
    - **Reduce Risk**
    - **Prevent Injuries**
    - **Save Lives**
    - **Reduce Unnecessary Costs**
    - **Continuously Improve**

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