



**Intersessional Working Group
Regional Observer Programme**

**Nadi Fiji
7-10th July 2008**

DETERMINING ONBOARD SAFETY FOR OBSERVERS

**WCPFC IWG ROP2 2008 – 10
22 March 2008**

The following is a copy of a paper first presented at IWG-ROP 1 titled “Vessel Safety Verification Form” this was listed as appendices (Appendix 0) to the “Draft Strategic Plan for the Development of the Regional Observer Programme” It should be expected by vessel masters that observers coming on board their vessels have been properly trained in Sea Safety Techniques. Working room for the observer and crew also needs to be checked to ensure both the crew and observer can work together without getting in each others way. The use of a form format to assist in determining safety is only to determine whether a vessel is safe enough or has enough room for an observer to carry out their duties in a hazardous environment that is as safe as possible.

1) Introduction

- a) Aspects of safety should be incorporated into the standard observer training courses, based on a commercially available at-sea safety course. The simplest courses last for 2-3 days and give instructions in the use of life rafts, life vests, first aid, fire extinguishers and other essential elements of safety. Any maritime authority will have details of courses available or instructors that can give training. It is important to revalidate these courses every few years to refresh and enhance the safety awareness of the observers. The observer must be aware of the main dangers inherent in working at sea, safety essentials and how to deal with typical emergency situations.

2) General Safety

- a) Observers should be made aware that they have the right to refuse to board a particular vessel if they consider it to be un-seaworthy or otherwise unsafe to the observer. Such a refusal should be based on whatever consideration is appropriate at the time and be fully documented in writing to the observer’s coordinator.

- b) Considerations may involve vessel stability, safety equipment provisions, manning levels, crew attitudes, expected weather conditions, accommodation facilities, and the observers' current physical health and mental well being.
- c) The vessel master is responsible for the safety of the observer while they are on board the vessel. The vessel must be fitted with appropriate life raft and life jacket safety equipment, which is in current survey. Adequate safety equipment must be available for the observer to use in case of an emergency.
- d) The observer programme should supply adequate and appropriate personal safety equipment for the gear type before the observer departs on the trip. Items may include Wet Weather Gear, Life Jacket, Deck boots, Working Gloves, Hard Hat, Safety Glasses, (Polaroid) and Freezer equipment etc.

3) Observer Vessel Safety Check (VSC)

- a) Before boarding a vessel a Vessel Safety Check should be carried out by a designated checker, usually the coordinator, boarding officer, or a senior observer. The VSC Form should be filled out and signed by the checking officers. If no one is available the observer may carry out the inspection. This form is only to be used to determine whether a vessel is safe to carry an observer, it is not to be used for the purposes of determining whether a vessel is safe to go to sea, and should not be used to delay or hinder any fishing practices.

4) Safe to board Observer

- a) If sufficient fields are acceptable to the checker and observer, then the observer will be permitted to board the vessel.

5) Unsafe to board the Vessel

- a) If the form indicates the vessel is unable to take the observer because it is not capable of meeting the WCPFC requirements to take the observer then this should be reported immediately to the vessel master, Commission ROP, flag State and vessel agents or operators. The report will advise of the standards of safety, health or inadequate working space that are not acceptable to place a ROP observer on the vessel.

6) Actions

- a) If safety is found to be inadequate on board a Vessel, The vessel may choose to rectify the safety areas of concern before departing with an observer ; in this case the Checker will recheck the vessel
- b) The vessel may choose to not upgrade its status immediately; therefore no observer will be placed on that particular vessel.
- c) Where a vessel is designated inadequate to board, the observer provider may choose other vessels from the same flag State and transfer the boarding to one of these vessels. The new vessel selected will go through the same process to ensure it is safe to board an observer.

- d) The Commission ROP will place the vessel reported as being unsafe to take an observer on a ROP list of vessels inadequate for observer boarding's. The vessel deemed unsafe will be reported by the Secretariat to the flag States so they can take action if required to get the reported vessel to meet their accepted safety standards for fishing vessels.
- e) A register of inadequate vessels for observer boarding's because of health and safety standards and what action has been taken by flag States of the vessels to areas of health and safety will be included in the annual ROP observer report. This report will be submitted to the TCC and will include the current status of all reported inadequate vessels. Reported inadequate vessels will be removed from the list when it is assured by the flag State that the vessel has been certified as being safe and in survey to their accepted standards and therefore able to carry a ROP observer. Vessels with current safety standards but deemed to be too small for observers to carry out their duties without getting in the way of the crew; will be listed as vessels too small for observer boarding's

Use of Form

- a) The "Vessel Information Form" is only to be used to determine whether a vessel is safe to carry an observer, it is not to be used for the purposes of determining whether a vessel is safe to go to sea, and should not be used to delay or hinder any fishing practices. Instructions to assist in the filling of this form is also included



WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION
REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME
VESSEL SAFETY INFORMATION

VESSEL INFORMATION							
TYPE OF VESSEL	PS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LL	<input type="checkbox"/>	P&L	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER
NAME OF VESSEL						Vessel Size (Length)	
FLAG STATE						< 16 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
VESSEL WCPFC WIN NUMBER						16-25 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
REGISTRATION NUMBER						26 -39 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
CALL SIGN						40-65 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
OWNER/OPERATOR						> 65 metres	<input type="checkbox"/>
MASTER /CAPTAIN							

VESSEL SAFETY INFORMATION FOR AN OBSERVER BOARDING.

ITEMS TO BE CHECKED	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
1. VESSEL MARKINGS TO WCPFC STANDARDS CMM 2004-03				
2. REGISTRATION DOCUMENTATION IN ORDER				
3. VESSEL SURVEY DOCUMENTATION CURRENT				
4. MARINE RADIO HF SSB OR SUBSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS				
5. MOUNTED FIRE EXTINGUISHERS (CURRENT CHECKED)				
6. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT (IN GOOD ORDER)				
7. NAVIGATION LIGHTS / VESSEL LIGHTS (WORKING ORDER)				
8. SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES OR BELL				
9. DISTRESS SIGNALS AND FLARES				
10. CORRECT SIZE PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES AVAILABLE				
11. APPROVED LIFE RAFT / LIFE BOATS UNDER CURRENT SURVEY AND ADEQUATE FOR NUMBER OF PERSONS ONBOARD.				
12. OTHER WORK RELATED VESSELS ON BOARD THAT COULD BE UTILISED IN CASE OF EMERGENCY				
13. EPIRBs (CURRENT SURVEY)				
14. NAUTICAL CHARTS AND NAVIGATION AIDS (GPS/RADAR)				
15. FIRST AID EQUIPMENT				
16. ADEQUATE SANITATION				
17. SATELLITE PHONE				
18. EMAIL/FAX				
19. INSURANCE FOR OBSERVER WHILST ON BOARD				
20. IS THERE ADEQUATE ROOM ON BOARD FOR AN OBSERVER AND CREW TO WORK TOGETHER IN A SAFE MANNER				

VESSEL AT THE TIME OF CHECKING IS CONSIDERED TO BE UNSAFE FOR AN OBSERVER BOARDING

VESSEL AT THE TIME OF CHECKING MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SAFETY FOR AN OBSERVER BOARDING

NAME OF CHECKER _____ POSITION _____

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

The Vessel Safety check (VSC) carried out by the "Checker" does not constitute or should be construed as a warranty or guarantee of the seaworthiness of the vessel, or the serviceability or adequacy of equipment on board. There is no assumption of liability of any kind for advice given and opinions expressed in connection to this VSC examination.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORM ROP -2

EXPLANATION ON VSC REQUIREMENTS

1. VESSEL MARKINGS TO WCPFC CMM 2004-STANDARDS STANDARDS WCPFC markings are the same as FAO standards except that the WCPFC CMM 2004-03 will allow all letters of the alphabet to be used in the call sign.
2. REGISTRATION DOCUMENTATION IN ORDER Flag State Registration documentation papers must be on board and available to be viewed and must show registration number, boats name, country and port of registration.
3. VESSEL SURVEY DOCUMENTATION CURRENT Fishing vessels and support vessels operating in the WCPFC must comply with their flag State regulations and Code of Practice for Safety. Ship surveys including condition, safety and security aspects of hull, machinery and on board safety equipment must be available to be viewed.
4. MARINE RADIO HF SSB(WORKING ORDER) Marine SSB (Single Side Band) is a means of communications for many fishing vessels. The radio must be capable of transmitting and receiving frequencies used for emergency marine communications as agreed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) or by the flag State of the vessel.
5. MOUNTED FIRE EXTINGUISHER, Fire extinguishers must be readily available and be of the correct type. Portable extinguishers require periodic maintenance therefore the last inspection date when last tested or refilled should be available. All must be currently serviceable and if possible should be checked to ensure extinguishes have not been fully or partially discharged.
6. FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT Fire fighting must be readily available and be currently serviceable; a minimum standard of fire fighting equipment as designated by the flag state must be on all on all fishing vessels.
7. NAVIGATION LIGHTS AND VESSEL LIGHTS Vessels must be able to display international standard navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and in conditions of reduced visibility. Internal and external vessel lighting must be fully operational. In the case of power failure, battery operated safety lights must be appropriately placed to ensure a safe exit from the vessel.
8. SOUND PRODUCING SIGNALS OR BELLS Vessels must carry a sound producing device (whistle, horn, siren or bell) capable of a prolonged blast or ringing for distress signaling purposes.
9. DISTRESS SIGNAL AND FLARES. Vessels should have on board appropriate pyrotechnics devices that will suitably operate in both day and night emergency situations.
10. CORRECT SIZE PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE AVAILABLE Life Jackets must be approved types and in good serviceable condition, Life Jackets of suitable sizes must be readily accessible for the observer and all crew. Life jackets will not be stored away or locked in cupboards or rooms.
11. APPROVED LIFE RAFT In addition to meeting the requirements of the (IMO) International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea; life rafts must be in current survey and be adequate to carry the amount of crew and the observer.
12. OTHER WORK RELATED VESSELS Many vessels have auxiliary vessels that can be used in emergency situations. Note these.
13. EPIRBs International Standard 406 MHz EPIRB. The signal frequency (406 MHz) has been designated internationally for use only for distress. Check to see the frequency number and position of these EPIRBs, a few vessels may have the older relatively common type of 121.5/243 MHz emergency beacons; these will be obsolete in late 2008.
14. NAUTICAL CHARTS AND NAVIGATION AIDS Vessel must have a set of appropriate, up to date nautical charts. Check to ensure that the Radar, GPS and any other navigational equipment is in good order and functioning.
15. FIRST AID EQUIPMENT The vessel must have adequate first aid facilities with current "use by dates" on all apparatus, drugs, dressings and other first aid paraphernalia.
16. SANITATION The vessel must have adequate clean, well maintained sanitation and bathing facilities.
17. PHONE EMAIL/FAX If the vessel has a Phone Fax or Email system note the numbers for future reference or emergencies.
18. INSURANCE All vessels must have insurance for the Observer when the observer is on board, often the observer is covered by adding him/her to the crew list, ask to see what insurance the vessel has and ensure adding the observer to the policy is permitted.
19. INSURANCE All Insurance needs to be confirmed
20. ADEQUATE ROOM There must be sufficient working space to allow crew and the observer to do their tasks without getting in each others way.

The explanations in the Vessel Safety check are by no means exhaustive. Checkers should ensure that other aspects of the vessel are considered before an observer is placed aboard, e.g. Accommodation, Fishing strategy, Vessel Size, etc. If vessels are unable to supply some items listed e.g. Fax Phone, etc, it does not mean an observer can not be placed. The ultimate boarding is the decision of the observer.