



Safety Notice Number: **000016**

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Pot Hauler Requirements Under the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation

Summary

Pot haulers are commonly used on fishing vessels to retrieve lobster traps, crab pots and other gear from the ocean floor. They present significant safety risks to crew members because pot haulers are powered equipment that move heavy loads.

There is considerable variation in the design of pot haulers used in the fishing industry. As a result, some pot haulers may meet the definition of a hoist under the Occupational Safety General Regulations and some may not.

During inspections, Occupational Health and Safety officers will review manufacturer specifications and make visual observations of the equipment to determine whether a particular pot hauler meets the definition of a hoist under the regulations.

Where manufacturer specifications are not available, employers must obtain specifications prepared by a professional engineer in accordance with section 1.11(b) of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations. When this happens, the engineer will decide if the pot hauler meets the hoist definition.

Regardless of whether a pot hauler is classified as a hoist, employers must ensure the equipment is properly designed, installed, inspected, maintained and operated in accordance with applicable occupational health and safety requirements and the manufacturer's specifications.

Why This Matters

Between 2015 and 2024, an average of nine injuries involving hoists on fishing vessels were reported to WCB Nova Scotia each year¹.

The most common injury event was workers being struck by an object, accounting for approximately 50 per cent of reported injuries. Injuries involving workers being caught in or compressed by equipment accounted for approximately 18 per cent of reported injuries, while overexertion injuries accounted for approximately 16 per cent.

Actual injury numbers may be higher because not all fishing vessels participate in the workers' compensation system.

The risks associated with pot haulers has led to a fatality of a crew member aboard a fishing vessel in Prince Edward Island. ²

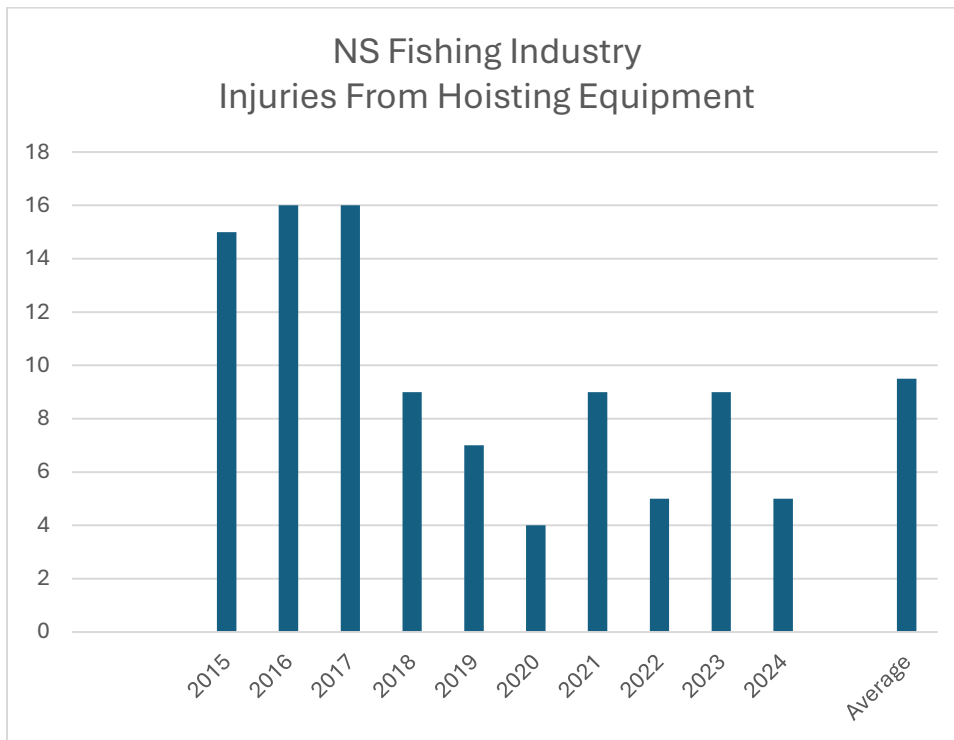


FIGURE 1: Nova Scotia Fishing Industry Injuries Involving Hoists

References

1. Workers Compensation Board Nova Scotia injury data from 2015 to 2024
2. Workers Compensation Board Prince Edward Island, [Hazard Alert](#), July 2024.

Contact

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