



Safety at sea

The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry recognises that fishing is among the most dangerous occupations in the world and the Association and its members work with the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) to ensure that the fishing fleet is seaworthy and that employees are properly trained and equipped to work safely at sea.

The survey regime

Fifty nine large stern trawlers operate in the South African deep-sea trawl fishery. Each of these vessels is required to complete a SAMSA Local General Safety Survey on an annual basis. Each survey is conducted by a certified SAMSA surveyor. A vessel is only certified as seaworthy and safe once it has met a rigorous set of requirements. Some examples of the standard checks that are made during the annual SAMSA Local General Safety Survey are provided in the table below. Note that this list is by no means exhaustive, it is only meant to demonstrate the kind of safety checks that are carried out annually to ensure the seaworthiness and safety of the fishing fleet.

Documentation	<p>A full suite of documentation must be carried by each vessel and is checked by the SAMSA surveyor. Documentation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a valid dry docking certificate (attesting to the soundness of the vessel's hull); • a radio certificate issued by a specialised radio surveyor; • a stability book (SAMSA must be informed of any structural changes that take place on the vessel); • a compass deviation card (attesting to the accuracy of the compass); • charts for the area of operation; • service and inspection certificates for life rafts, rescue boats, fire fighting equipment, gas appliances, medical locker, air receivers, electrical equipment and lifting appliances; • an official log book; • occupational safety regulations and records; • fire control and safety plans; • a garbage plan in line with the Marpol Convention. <p>One member of the ship's officers must be appointed in writing as the safety officer and must be conversant with his/her duties and responsibilities.</p>
Distress signals	<p>Each vessel carries a prescribed number of in-date flares, flags and signaling equipment. The general alarm and fire alarm are tested by the surveyor.</p>
Navigation equipment	<p>A full suite of navigation equipment, including compass, lights, sound signals and physical signals (e.g. buoys and cones) must be on board and tested by the surveyor.</p>
Lifesaving equipment	<p>Life rafts, rescue boats, life jackets, buoyancy aids, line throwing appliances, lifebuoys and electronic signaling equipment (EPIRB and SART) must be serviced annually by SAMSA-certified service providers. The surveyor checks that sufficient quantities are carried.</p>
Fire fighting equipment	<p>Servicing must be carried out by a SAMSA approved Marine Fire Service Station.</p>
Medical certificates and medical locker	<p>Each member of a fishing crew undergoes an annual health check and a doctor must certify that the crew member is healthy and fit to work at sea.</p> <p>Each vessel carries a medical locker containing a broad range of medications and equipment for treating injuries and illness. The contents of each locker are checked annually by a doctor or pharmacist.</p>

Safety training

Training standards and requirements for every crew member on a deep-sea trawler – from the most junior Ordinary Seafarer to the Master (skipper) of the vessel – are clearly stipulated in the Merchant Shipping Safe Manning, Training and Certification Regulations (Merchant Shipping Act of 1951).

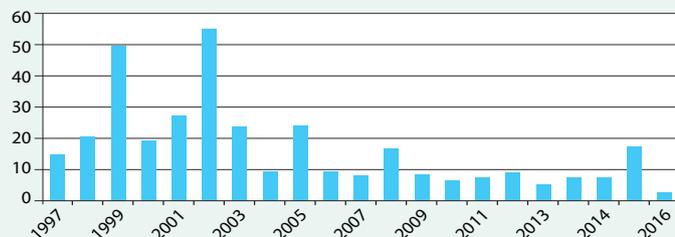
Before being employed on a fishing vessel, a prospective crewmember must complete approved pre-sea training and meet the specified standards of competency. In addition, every member of a fishing crew must complete approved training in personal survival techniques.

At stipulated intervals, senior officers are required to participate in refresher courses in marine firefighting, first aid and proficiency training in survival craft and rescue boats.

The SAMSA Centre of Fishing

The SAMSA Centre of Fishing promotes safe fishing through awareness programmes, implementation of international conventions and local maritime policies and regulations to improve the working conditions of seafarers, undertake incident and accident investigations and promote the development of the industry. Since the establishment of the SAMSA Centre for Fishing in 2002, the number of deaths of fishers has dropped considerably and consistently. The downward trend is illustrated in the graph below. It may be attributed to the constructive partnership between the SAMSA Centre for Fishing and the fishing industry. This partnership has stimulated awareness of the critical importance of safe vessels and well-trained seafarers.

Deaths per year



The international context

South Africa is a signatory to:

- the International Labour Convention (ILO) No. 188 "Work in Fishing" which is designed to improve conditions for millions of workers in the fishing industry;
- the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel of the International Maritime Organization. The Convention applies to crews of seagoing fishing vessels of >24m. (South Africa has yet to ratify this Convention.)
- the IMO Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing vessels and has ratified the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the 1993 Protocol relating the Torremolinos Convention.

For more information

Marine Notice No. 1 of 2017. A review of incidents resulting in death in the South African fishing industry:

<https://www.samsa.org.za/sites/samsa.org.za/files/MN%201%20of%202017.pdf>

Merchant Shipping Act 1951: <https://www.samsa.org.za/legislation/merchant-shipping-act-1951>

Safe Manning, Training and Certification regulations:
[http://www.samsa.org.za/sites/samsa.org.za/files/MS\(SafeManning,CertificationandTraining\)STCW,Regs2013.pdf](http://www.samsa.org.za/sites/samsa.org.za/files/MS(SafeManning,CertificationandTraining)STCW,Regs2013.pdf)

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Unlocking the value of the Cape hake resource