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# AGENDA

Meeting: International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group  
Attendees: List of Attendees in Zoom Invitation  
Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021  
Time: 11:00am-12:00pm EST  
Location: Zoom Meeting Details in Meeting Invitation

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<i>Discussion Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Time</i>
- <i>Welcome and Introductions</i>	Julie Sorensen	5 min
- <i>IFISH6 Update</i>	Jennifer Lincoln	5 min
- <i>Personal Locator Beacons – A PFD’s Best Friend</i>	Robert Brown	20 min
- <i>Topics of Interest</i>	Open Discussion	25 min
- <i>Next Steps</i>	Julie Sorensen	5 min

## *Speaker*

Robert Brown, Ph.D, P.Eng  
Research Scientist  
Maritime and Offshore Safety  
Marine Institute, Memorial University  
155 Ridge Rd., PO Box 4920  
St. John's, NL, Canada A1C 5R3  
+1-709-778-0422 (w)  
+1-709-685-6479 (m)  
[www.mi.mun.ca/oss/research](http://www.mi.mun.ca/oss/research)

## *Description*

### **Personal Locator Beacons - the PFD’s best friend: Measuring performance and usability of PLBs for emergencies at sea**

Canada's Transportation Safety Board reports that fishing industry deaths in recent years were the result of a lack of floatation and emergency signaling devices. Emergency signaling devices such as personal locator beacons (PLBs) are used to notify search and rescue (SAR) that an incident has occurred which requires a rapid

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response. A PLB is a handheld (and wearable) emergency radio transmitter that is manually operated by the person in distress. They are designed to give notification of an incident and quickly provide the location of those wearing the devices. PLBs have been used successfully to reduce search time and have helped save many lives. They should be considered an integral piece of emergency equipment at sea, yet they are not widely used. There are some questions regarding technical performance and usability of PLBs, particularly in harsh cold environments. This short talk will present recent research at the Marine Institute, Memorial University to examine the performance of PLB radio signal detection in realistic conditions as well their usability in harsh conditions where the user may have reduced dexterity due to cold-water exposure.

### *Background*

#### **International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group**

In 2017, researchers from around the world assembled in St. John's, Newfoundland to attend IFISH5 [The International Fishing Industry Safety and Health Conference], the only international conference dedicated to fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing occupational health and safety. The conference was organized by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Memorial University and the NEC and offered participants from many backgrounds and disciplines an opportunity to attend keynote lectures, workshops, presentations, and poster sessions on commercial fishing safety research.

During the 2017 conference, the NEC partnered with national and international commercial fishing safety researchers to organize a panel discussion entitled "Changing Commercial Fishing Personal Flotation Use Behavior: what can we learn from efforts to address the most important safety technology adoption challenge of our time?". The panel was well attended and safety researchers who participated strongly advocated for keeping the conversation and collaboration going. The NEC agreed to organize an international work group of commercial fishing researchers interested in the topic of lifejacket use and since then the number of attendees has grown considerably. The group includes over 60 international researchers, safety trainers, and interested parties.

December 2, 2020, the group met for the second time, virtually, to build connections with other researchers, share resources, and further collaborations among individuals, organizations and countries seeking to increase PFD use in commercial fishing. Frankie Horne of the Royal National Lifeboat Association (visit <https://rnli.org/>) lead the call with a discussion of their efforts to reduce fatalities in commercial fishing and their cold water survival tank lifejacket drills with commercial fishermen. Anyone interested in learning more about this international group of commercial fishing safety researchers should contact [rebecca.weil@bassett.org](mailto:rebecca.weil@bassett.org).

### *Next Meetings*

March 3, 2021

June 2, 2021

September 8, 2021

December 8, 2021