

AGENDA

Meeting: International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group
 Attendees: List of Attendees on Meeting Invite
 Date: Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025
 Time: 11:00am-12:00pm ET
 Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

DISCUSSION TOPIC	PRESENTER	TIME
- WELCOME/ GENERAL UPDATES	Julie Sorensen	5
- WHO'S GLOBAL WORK ON DROWNING PREVENTION	David Meddings, World Health Organization	25
- DISCUSSION	Open Discussion	25
- WRAP-UP/NEXT STEPS	Kim Gertz	5

Title

WHO's Global Work on Drowning Prevention

Description

This session will provide an overview of the World Health Organization's global work coordinating drowning prevention, including recent UN and World Health Assembly resolutions. The presentation will highlight the importance of collaborating with occupational sectors where drowning risk is significant – such as commercial fishing – and outline how international drowning prevention strategies intersect with PFD awareness and adoption efforts.

Bios

Dr David Meddings was born in Canada where he obtained his degree in Medicine and subsequent Canadian Fellowship in Community Medicine. He has earned several awards including the S. Stewart Murray Award and a Fellowship from the Medical Research Council of Canada. His clinical work in humanitarian contexts began in Sudan in 1989 and included a series of missions in conflict areas with the International Committee of the Red Cross, where he ultimately served as Chief Epidemiologist at the ICRC Headquarters in Geneva.

In 2002 he was recruited by the World Health Organization where he currently oversees prevention of unintentional injuries apart from road traffic injuries, as well as leading capacity building efforts for injury and violence prevention. Dr Meddings is Executive Editor of a range of WHO global assessments and technical guidance publications on drowning prevention, provides technical support to drowning prevention efforts supported by WHO in a range of countries, and leads the efforts of the WHO called for in the first ever UN General Assembly and World Health Assembly Resolutions on drowning to coordinate actions on drowning prevention within the UN system. Dr Meddings is also Executive Editor of WHO's first-ever technical package on falls prevention and management across the life course, and coordinates WHO's work on burn prevention.

About the International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group

In 2018, 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 Northeast Center (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 2018 conference, the Northeast Center 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 100 international researchers, safety trainers, and interested parties.

The group meets quarterly with a virtual platform, to build connections with other researchers, share resources, and further collaborations among individuals, organizations and countries seeking to increase PFD use in commercial fishing. Recordings of recent presentations may be found on the IFISH website: <https://ifishconference.ca/pfd-work-group/>

Anyone interested in learning more about this international group of commercial fishing safety researchers should contact Kimberly.gertz@bassett.org

Upcoming Meetings: 2025, 2026

- Wednesday, March 4th, 2026: 11-12 ET
- Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026: 11-12 ET
- Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026: 11-12 ET