



August 1995

# ALASKA FACE Facts

Department of Health and Social Services  
Division of Public Health-Section of CHEMS  
Occupational Injury Prevention Program

## Commercial Fishing Vessel Skipper Dies After Being Pulled Into a Deck Winch



On August 2, 1995, a 24-year-old, male commercial fishing vessel skipper (victim) died as a result of being pulled into a deck winch of a 56-foot purse seiner working the salmon fishery. The incident occurred while a load of salmon was being brought in and the seine net pursed prior to placing the load on the vessel's deck. A line ("purse line") from the net was placed through the winch head to close the bottom of the seine net. The vessel skipper stood on the starboard side of the vessel near the deck winch, while he coiled the purse line on onto the deck as it came through the winch. The "pass line," which connects to the purse line and is used to bring the purse line onto the vessel, was disconnected from the boat end of the net. This line fell across the deck winch. The victim reached over and picked up this line to remove it and keep the line from becoming entangled in the winch. During this process his raingear was caught by the moving purse line and he was pulled through the winch head one revolution. As he came around the other side of winch his head struck the deck. CPR was attempted, but was unsuccessful because the crewmen could not get a clear airway. Based on the findings of the epidemiologic investigation, to prevent similar occurrences employers should:

- ensure that all winch operators do not work so close to winch-driven lines or rotating winch heads as to potentially entangle the worker or the worker's clothing.
- ensure that all winch operators confine loose clothing, as far as is practicable, when working near a winch-driven line or rotating winch head.
- ensure that winches have a foot pedal-operated "deadman's switch" that would deactivate the winch if the operator lost his balance and removed his foot from the switch, or assign an operator to attend the winch control at all times.

To view previous FACE reports please visit the Occupational Injury Prevention Program website:

[http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chems/occupation\\_injury](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chems/occupation_injury)

or

Call or fax your request to:

907-269-5221 (phone) 907-269-5236 (fax)

To receive the latest FACE updates via the Internet please send an email to [djilly@health.state.ak.us](mailto:djilly@health.state.ak.us)