



# SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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**Subject:** *FISHING VESSEL SAFETY REGULATIONS*  
Stability, major modifications and record of modifications

This bulletin replaces Ship Safety Bulletin No. [01/2008](#)

## Purpose

Modifications to the structure or equipment of a vessel may change its stability and the way it behaves at sea. This bulletin highlights the following obligations:

1. Doing a stability assessment, if the vessel has gone through a major modification or change in activity that is likely to adversely affect its stability<sup>1</sup>
2. Recording modifications made to the structure or equipment of a vessel<sup>2</sup>
3. Having accurate vessel stability information and useable guidelines the vessel's master and crew can easily and quickly interpret<sup>3</sup>
4. Updating operational procedures when a vessel is modified, to account for changes that may affect stability<sup>4</sup>
5. Providing the new owner with any vessel records when ownership of a fishing vessel is transferred<sup>5</sup>

It also explains:

- how to record modifications made to the structure or equipment of a vessel as they take place
- how modifications may change a vessel's stability and its behaviour at sea

<sup>1</sup> FVSR. Subparagraph 3.48(1)(a)(ii)

<sup>2</sup> FVSR. Section 3.12 and 3.17(2)

<sup>3</sup> FVSR. Section 3.57(c)

<sup>4</sup> FVSR. Section 3.61

<sup>5</sup> FVSR. Section 3.17(3)

## Keywords:

1. Stability Assessment
2. Major Modifications
3. Record of Modifications
4. Competent Person
5. Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations

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## Scope

The information, guidelines and record of modifications form in this bulletin will benefit the owner or master of any commercial fishing vessel, no matter its length or tonnage.

If you are an owner or master of a commercial fishing vessel, we urge you to follow the steps outlined here.

## New Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations

The [Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations](#) (FVSR) came into force on July 13, 2017. The FVSR contain new requirements for small fishing vessels, including:

- stability
- keeping a record of modifications affecting stability
- stability notices
- written safety procedures

Owners of small fishing vessels should refer to Ship Safety Bulletin 03/2017 to understand how the new rules impact new and existing vessels differently. [SSB 03/2017: Coming into force of the Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations](#)

As well, subsection 9(11) of the [Large Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations](#) (LFVIR) requires a vessel to go through a new stability assessment if it is modified in a way that affects its stability characteristics.

## Background

The [Canada Shipping Act, 2001](#):

- Requires a vessel's master to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the vessel and people on board
- Requires the vessel's authorized representative to develop procedures for the safe operation of the vessel and for dealing with emergencies
  - This includes assessing any impact to vessel stability when the vessel is modified

Some modifications have an obvious effect on the stability of the vessel, such as a change in fishing method that increases the amount of equipment or gear on deck. However, other modifications may not be significant enough to require an immediate reassessment of stability.

The FVSR require the authorized representative to keep a record of any modifications or series of modifications that affect the vessel stability. Changing loading conditions (for example, the amount or type of cargo or gear the vessel carries, or where and how it is stored) can impact stability and must be recorded.

## New form: Fishing Vessel Record of Modifications Affecting Stability

Transport Canada created the [Fishing Vessel Record of Modifications Affecting Stability](#) to:

- give authorized representatives a way to record modifications over time and help them meet the requirements of the FVSR
- help authorized representatives know when to ask for advice from a competent person and when to update their stability information

When they inspect or monitor a vessel, Transport Canada inspectors will ask to review this form. Inspectors may use this opportunity to discuss the extent and potential impacts of the modifications it lists. They will note any modifications on the vessel's inspection record.

During an inspection or monitoring inspection, the inspector will also verify that, if required:

- There is a signed copy of the stability booklet or record of stability onboard
- The signed copy is up to date and accurately reflects the vessel's configuration (length, breadth, draught, tonnage, equipment onboard, etc.) and fishing activities
- A stability notice is posted onboard the vessel

When a vessel is inspected, if the inspector determines it was modified and its stability should have been reassessed or is inadequate, they may require a stability assessment.

When the vessel is modified, the authorized representative must complete this form, noting:

- any additions or changes (other than routine maintenance) to lifting equipment and fishing gear
- any changes in the fishing method, the type of fish caught or the way the catch is stowed
- any modifications to the vessel's structure, equipment or gear that add, remove or result in the relocation of weights more than 100 kg (220 pounds), along with smaller weights if they adversely affect vessel stability
- that the vessel has an up-to-date stability assessment, which accurately reflects the vessel's configuration and what it is used for

Lastly, add the date of the modification and initial the line. Include any photos or drawings of the modification, if possible. During the inspection, if there were no modifications, write "no modifications," the date and your initials on the next available line.

For more detailed information on major modifications or a change in activity, read Transport Canada's [TP 15392 – Guidelines for Fishing Vessel Major Modifications or a Change in Activity](#).

You can get more information about major modifications by contacting your nearest [Transport Canada regional office](#).

## **Important considerations**

### **Stability notices**

The new FVSR requires the competent person who does a stability assessment for a fishing vessel to prepare a stability notice for the vessel.

For fishing vessels not exceeding 24.4 m or 150 gross tonnage, as of July 13, 2017 a fishing vessel that undergoes a stability assessment must have a stability notice posted on board, which was prepared by a competent person.

What is a stability notice?

A simple way to present the stability data, characteristics and limitations of a vessel, in a way that the vessel's operator and crew can quickly and easily read.

Get templates and instructions for stability notices on our [small fishing vessel safety web page](#). Always keep the stability notice up to date and use it in the daily safe operation of the vessel.

### **We also recommend that**

- **all owners of large fishing vessels (over 24.4 m in length or 150 tons, gross tonnage) have a stability notice in place, for the safety of the vessel and crew and**
- **all owners of small fishing vessels (not more than 24.4 m in length and not more than 150 gross tonnage) have a stability notice in place for the vessel and crew**

Please note that, according to the FVSR, if a stability notice does not fully describe how to safely operate the vessel within the limits set out in its stability booklet or record of stability:

- The authorized representative must establish written safety procedures
- These procedures must be in plain language, and in English or French or both, according to the needs of the crew

This ensures the vessel is operated within safe limits.

### **Written safety procedures**

The fishing vessel's authorized representative must provide written safety procedures for the crew, as set out in the new [Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations](#).

Section 3.16 requires the authorized representative to:

- establish written safety procedures, in English or French or in both, according to the needs of the crew
- implement these procedures to familiarize people on board

This applies to new and existing fishing vessels. Written safety procedures help fishing vessel owners and operators better manage safety on board their vessels, and reduce incidents and accidents.

Owners are also required to put in place written safety procedures, which familiarize the crew with measures they must take to:

- safely load, stow and unload fish catches, baits and consumables
- safely operate towing and lifting equipment
- prevent overloading of the vessel

Update the written safety procedures any time the vessel is modified or its activity changes, or when the stability assessment is updated.

If you need help or more information, please contact your nearest [\*Transport Canada regional office\*](#).

### **More information**

- [SSB 03/2017: Coming into force of the Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations](#)
- [TP 15392 – Guidelines for Fishing Vessel Major Modification or a Change in Activity](#)
- [TP 15393 – Adequate Stability and Safety Guidelines for Fishing Vessels](#)
- Updated [small fishing vessel safety web pages](#)
- [How to enroll in the Small Vessel Compliance Program](#)

### **References**

- *Canada Shipping Act, 2001 – Small Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations*
- *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (Regulations Amending the Small Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations)*