

HAZARD ALERT

Industry: Fishing

Age: 39 years

Experience: 25 years

Area: Queen Charlotte Islands

Improper Chain Used in Overhead Rigging Kills Commercial Fisher

A longline vessel was participating in a fishery for rockfish and halibut. The crew were in the process of retrieving a string of gear when it became hung up on the ocean floor. The crewmember at the hydraulic winch controls attempted to remove the gear from the ocean floor by applying full power to the hydraulics. The strain on the rigging caused the jib boom, located directly overhead of the crewmember at the controls, to fall, fatally injuring the crewmember.

The vessel was rigged with an outboard block at the end of a jib boom secured from and perpendicular to the main boom. The jib boom was held in place by fore and aft wire rope stays. It was held horizontal by galvanized chain extending from the outboard end of the jib boom up to the main mast. The jib boom fell when a weld in a link in the chain failed. The chain used in the rigging was a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch Schedule 30 (Grade 3) galvanized chain (commonly referred to as “Proof Coil” or “Proof Chain”). This chain is a high-carbon, non-alloy chain, which was not designed and is not recommended by chain manufacturers for overhead lifting.

Safe work practices:

- Ensure that all chain rigged for overhead lifting is approved and rated for that function, such as a Grade 8 or Schedule 80 alloy chain.
- Be aware of the intended use and rated capacities of ropes, chains, cables, fittings, and attachments when installing overhead rigging, including the compounding effect of triangulation.
- Ensure that workstation locations limit workers' exposure to injury should any part of the rigging fail.
- Whenever possible, replace overhead booms used to guide lines with outboard davits that would fall overboard should a failure occur.



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