Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) Drug/Alcohol Awareness Training

NEFOP, ASM, IFS

Presented during initial trainings
Information and photos provided by the United States Coast Guard
OBJECTIVES

- Identify some types of drugs potentially used on vessels
- Identify some drug paraphernalia
  - Marijuana
  - Cocaine/Crack Cocaine
  - Methamphetamines
  - Heroin
- Identify potential physical and behavioral symptoms of drug and alcohol use
- Understand how to stay safe
- Understand protocols for reporting
MARIJUANA – most commonly seen on Vessels

Blood shot eyes
Slowed speech
Averting eye contact or unsteady gaze
Strong odor of marijuana
Sleepiness - Dangerous during wheel watches
METHAMPHETAMINE

Dilated pupils
Eye twitching
Repetitious behavior
Hyperactivity
Infections or abscesses
Burns on lips and around mouth
“Meth sores”- open sores from obsessive scratching and picking
“Meth Mouth”- rotting teeth
Potentially will take every 4 hrs
HEROIN

Shortness of breath
Constricted (small) pupils
Sudden changes in behavior or actions
Disorientation
Cycles of hyper alertness followed by sudden nodding off
Droopy appearance, as if extremities are heavy
Avoiding eye contact, or distant field of vision
Slurred, garbled, or incoherent speech
COCAINE/CRACK COCAINE

- Smoked
  - Glass Pipes
  - Soda Cans
  - Foil
  - Steel Wool or Medal Screens
- Snorted
  - Rolled up money
  - Pen shafts (ink removed)
  - Straws

Dilated pupils
Runny nose
White residue around nostrils
Anxious
High levels of energy and activity
Excited, exuberant speech
Potentially will take every 1 hr
Alcohol

- Signs and symptoms of someone potentially intoxicated
  - Lower inhibitions
  - Loss of fine motor coordination
  - Weakened balance
  - Slower reaction times
  - Glossy appearance to eyes
  - Blurry vision
  - Heavy sweating
  - Mental confusion
  - Slower pupil response
  - Slower heart rate, breathing, blood pressure
  - **Inability to operate a vessel safely**
Recognizing unusual behavior on vessels – potential examples

- Going into fish hold/engine room too often, unnecessarily
- Spending abnormal amount of time in the head (some drugs may take 10-15 minutes to take)
- Compulsive behavior- excessive checking of lines
- Person does not eat for an extended amount of time, maybe 2 days
- Being on back deck at night, for no apparent reason
- Meeting up with another boat while offshore
- Many unusual behaviors could also be normal and the result of a hard working crew and captain!
HOW TO STAY SAFE

- Prepare – try to see all crew, make eye contact, meet crew before leaving port – active information gathering
- Know the potential signs and symptoms of drugs
- Recognize potential drug influenced behaviors
- Making appropriate decisions to not escalate conflict, if someone is on drugs
- Don’t take drugs, the NEFOP Standards of Conduct state that observers “Must not engage in any use or distribution of illegal substances.”
- Use your gut feeling, along with common sense
- Remember – a crew member on drugs doesn’t necessarily make it unsafe on the vessel, depends on the situation
- Some unusual behavior may be common on vessels and not associated with drug use – very tired crew due to working hard and limited amount of sleep, no time to eat, hyper active due to consuming energy drinks, moody behavior due to lack of catch....
When to Report Drug/Alcohol use?

- Standards for under the influence of alcohol or a dangerous drug – Code of Federal Regulations, 33 CFR 95
  - Drug and Alcohol abuse aboard commercial fishing vessels is prohibited.
  - No vessel may be operated by an intoxicated individual (defined as any crewmember, pilot or watchstander on any commercial vessel).
  - The individual operating a commercial vessel is considered intoxicated if he/she has a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level of .04 or the effect of the intoxicant(s) consumed by the individual on the person’s manner, disposition, speech, muscular movement, general appearance or behavior is apparent by observation.
Reporting Protocols

- Report operator abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Report if you felt unsafe during your trip
- Online Incident Report – selecting ‘unsafe vessel conditions’ (Incident Report and instructions are located at http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/forms/)

Questions?:
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