HB

366

REPRESENTATIVE ALAN AUSTERMAN Alaska State Legislature

P.O. Box 2368, Kodiak, Alaska 99615 (907) 486-5930 • Session: State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801 465-248

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 366

"An Act relating to marine safety training and education programs."

JANUARY 11, 1996

The Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA) has been operating in the State of Alaska for 10 years. The primary purpose of this organization is to reduce the loss of life and injury in the Alaskan marine environment by providing education through a statewide network of qualified marine safety instructors.

AMSEA provides the safety training required by the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988 to communities throughout Alaska. The Act, which took effect in 1991, requires a minimum in safety training and equipment for commercial fishing vessels.

AMSEA also helps Alaskans by providing marine safety instructor training who in turn teach drill instructor courses. These marine safety instructors also train the Alaska boating and fishing public, including many children and adults, in marine safety. Of the 7300 people AMSEA trained in 1995, 2000 were from the commercial fishing industry, 3700 were children.

According to a recent study by the Native Health Service, AMSEA training significantly reduced fatalities among commercial fishermen. This coincides with a 50 percent drop in fishing fatalities in Alaska in the last four years.

AMSEA is a nonprofit, community-based information and training network, supported by many volunteers. Its annual budget has ranged from $100,000 to $250,000 in the past five years. It has been receiving 100 percent of its funding from federal grants but these federal grant programs are ending June 30, 1996. This organization deserves our intervention to ensure long-term funding source stability.

The Fishermen's Fund (AS 23.35.060) was created before statehood. One hundred percent of the fishermen's fund is funded by commercial fishing license fees. Sixty percent of license fees are dedicated to this fund. Since commercial fishermen are the beneficiaries of the required marine safety training, it is appropriate to allow part of the interest on the fund to be used to fund some of AMSEA's marine safety programs.

It is estimated that the Fishermen's Fund generates approximately $310,000 in interest a year. By way of this legislation, AMSEA is requesting approximately $155, 000 a year.

AMSEA Alaska Marine Safety Education Association
PO Box 2592, Sitka, Alaska 99835 PH (907) 747-3287 FAX (907) 747-1406

August 4, 1995

Alan Austerman
P.O. Box 2368
Kodiak, Ak. 99615

Dear Representative Austerman:

I am writing this letter to you in regards to funding for AMSEA's statewide training and education efforts in marine safety. Our financial situation now is critical. This summer, our budget (which comes solely from federal sources) has been cut by 75% from an already very minimal staff and low overhead program.

Through AMSEA's efforts in FY 95, over 7,500 people in trained in marine safety. Over of those trained are children, and over 1,000 were commercial fishermen, who are required to take USCG approved training in conducting emergency on board drills and survival. The AMSEA network of community based marine safety instructors has been responsible for training over 2,800 commercial fishermen in this requirement over the last 4 years. This has resulted in training being brought into over 60 Alaskan fishing ports. As a recent study has indicated (Perkins study enclosed), this training has been at least partly responsible for the 50% reduction in commercial fishing fatalities over the last 3 years in Alaska.

Alaska is the only state in the nation without a safe boating program, yet Alaska has the highest drowning rate in the nation (12x the national average). AMSEA has tried to fill in this education gap for the last 10 years, but without some state support at this point, AMSEA's efforts will be reduced to near zero.

AMSEA recognizes that fiscal belt tightening needs to occur at both the state and federal level. However, there is a source of fishermen contributed revenues that could be used to support AMSEA's work. The Fishermen's Fund was established in the early 1950's to help defray minor medical costs suffered by fishermen on the job. This fund is totally contributed to by fishermen. Income to this fund has greatly increased over the past few years and expenses keep decreasing. Although this is a grandfathered dedicated fund, the interest it is now earning goes into state general operating revenues. At this time there is over 7.2 million dollars in this Fund. AMSEA cannot and does not wish to tap into this dedicated fund's principal itself, but thinks it would make common sense to use just 50% or so of the $300,000 in interest the Fund generates annually and put this back into injury prevention in fisheries and marine users.

AMSEA is seeking your support for this funding in the next legislative session. We have the support from a number of fishing groups on this issue. Sitka's Representative, Ben Grussdendorf is interested in working with you and Carl Moses this summer to pave the way for introducing a bill in the next legislature and working this through the budgetary process.
We hope that we can gain your support for this important work. AMSEA has worked for over

LETTER FROM ALASKA MARINE SAFETY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

10 years to build expertise in marine safety relevant to the Alaska working, recreational and subsistence environment. It would be grossly inefficient to lose this expertise and then have to recreate it all again at a future date because the need was still great.

Please feel free to contact this office or Rep. Grussendorf if you need any other information on this matter at this time. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Jerry Dzugan
Director/Training Coordinator

c.c. Rep. Ben Grussendorf
Rep. Carl Moses

enc: Perkins study
AMSEA Accomplishments
Proposal for long term funding base for AMSEA
Port list of AMSEA outreach delivered Drill Instructor courses
AMSEA brochure

AMSEA Alaska Marine Safety Education Association
P.O. Box 2592, Sitka, Alaska 99835 PH (907) 747-3287 FAX (907) 747-1406

AMSEA ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN LAST 10 YEARS

- Trained over 40,000 members of the public in marine safety
- 20,000 of those trained were children in Coastal and Interior Alaska.
- Trained over 2,500 commercial fishermen in required Drill Instructor training in 57 Alaskan ports.
- Trained over 400 Marine Safety Instructors who train members of the public in 50 home ports.
- Surveys document that at least 40 lives have been saved as a result of AMSEA training.
- A recent study has found that AMSEA's training had been responsible in part for the 50% reduction in commercial fishing fatalities in the last several years.
- Brought marine safety training into numerous remote Alaskan schools statewide.
- Sends out over 1,300 Marine Safety Update publications to mariners in Alaska 4 times a year.
- Acts as a clearinghouse for marine safety information. AMSEA's curriculum is a standardized curriculum on marine safety relevant to the Alaskan environment.
- Maintains an inventory of marine safety videos, supplies and training equipment to loan.
- Has written and produced award winning marine safety publications, displays and videos.
- Coordinated marine safety training efforts with over 50 public and private agencies.
- Worked with the Coast Guard to problem solve marine safety equipment problems and regulations.
- Helped members of the public access marine safety equipment resources.

AMSEA's efforts in marine safety have been recognized by awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Safety Council, U.S. Marine Safety Association and the Alaska Safety Advisory Council, among other awards.

AMSEA Alaska Marine Safety Education Association
P.O. Box 2592, Sitka, Alaska 99835 PH (907) 747-3287 FAX (907) 747-1406

DATE: Jan. 16, 1995
TO: Amy Daugherty, Rep. Austerman's office
FROM: Jerry Dzugan, AMSEA
SUBJECT: AMSEA FUNDING SOURCES FOR PAST 5 YEARS

Number of pages faxed 2

Projected FY 97 without state support	
Federal NIOSH (till 9/30/96 only)	$ 10,000
AMSEA memberships and donations	est5,000
FY 97 Total	$ 15,000
FY 96	
National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)	$ 40,130
(last year of 3 year grant- NIOSH being targeted altogether for elimination)	
Federal EMS for Children program	11,000
(one year grant- may be eligible to reapply)	
AMSEA Memberships and donations (estimated)	6,000
FY 96 Total	$ 57,130
FY 95	
Carl Perkins Vocational Training Grant (Federal DOE)	$ 54,164
(One year only-federal program discontinued in 1995)	
NIOSH	41,694
(2nd year of 3 year grant)	
Federal Health Promotion grant	25,000
(Last year of two year grant- program ended in 1994)	
U.S. Coast Guard	25,000
(One time contract for evaluation study)	
Center Disease Control (CDC) & Injury Prevention	17,500
(Last year of multi-year grant: discontinued)	
Federal EMS Children program	11,000
(one year grant)	
AMSEA Membership and donations (private)	5,000
FY 95 Total	$179,358
FY 94	
Carl Perkins Vocational Training Grant (Federal DOE)	$ 69,428
(one year only)	
NIOSH	50,000
(First year of three year funding)	
U.S. Coast Guard	50,000
(last year of unsolicited grant)	
Federal CDC grant	36,000
(third year of multi-year grant)	
Federal Health Promotion grant	25,000
(first year of new two year grant)	
AMSEA memberships and donations (private)	4,000
FY 94 Total	$234,428

FY 93	
U.S. Coast Guard (first year of two year unsolicited grant)	50,000
Federal CDC grant (second year of multi-year grant)	50,000
Federal Health Promotion (last year of two year grant)	20,000
AMSEA memberships and donations (private)	@ 3,000
FY 93 Total	$123,000
FY 92	
Federal CDC grant (first year of multi year grant)	$ 43,334
Federal Health Promotion (first year of two year grant)	20,000
U.S. Coast Guard grant (first of multiyear)	7,900
AMSEA memberships and donations (private)	1,950
Boat/U.S. Foundation	1,226
FY 92 Total	$ 74,410

[ISION OF LEGAL SERVIC[S
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

130 Seward Street, Suite 409
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2105

MEMORANDUM December 28, 1994

SUBJECT: Fisherman's fund (AS 23.35)(Work Order No. 9-LS0362)

TO: Representative Ben Grussendorf
Attn: Katherine

FROM: Michael F. Ford M. F.
Legislative Counsel

You have asked if the fisherman's fund (AS 23.30.060) could be used to fund a program to teach safety to commercial fishermen. As explained in this memo, I believe that using the fund to teach safety could only be done if this purpose was added as a statutory purpose of the fund.

The existing benefits provided by the fund, those under AS 23.35.070 - 23.35.140, are all intended to treat fishermen who become disabled. There are no funds provided for prevention of injuries, or safety training. It could certainly be argued that prevention of accidents is directly related to the general purpose of the fund, but without statutory authority this type of expenditure would be beyond the scope of the benefits provided under existing law.

I should also point out that if the legislature alters the fund this would raise dedicated fund issues. As a fund in existence at statehood, the fisherman's fund is exempt from the prohibition against dedicated funds contained in Article IX, section 7, of the Alaska Constitution. However, the Attorney General has taken the position that no change to a grandfathered fund is permitted without destroying the legal dedication and making the fund subject to the dedicated fund clause. In short, you could modify the purpose of the fisherman's fund to permit funding for a safety program but by doing so you run the risk of destroying the dedicated fund exemption presently enjoyed by the fund.

If you have further questions on this matter please contact me.

MFF:lmb
95-063.lmb

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Division of Legislative Finance

P.O.Box 113200
Juneau, AK 99811-3200
(907) 465-3795
FAX (907) 463-4885

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 16, 1996

TO Representative Alan Austerman

ATTN Amy Daugherty

FROM Jetta Whittaker
Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Fishermen's Fund Statistics

You asked for some general information on the Fishermen's Fund to accompany House Bill 366. I was able to determine the following from the Governor's budget detail book and conversations with the Departments of Labor and Revenue.

The Disabled Fisherman's Fund provides for assistance with the costs of occupational injuries and illness for Alaska's licensed commercial fishermen who are injured or become ill due to commercial fishing activities on shore or in Alaska waters. The fund consists of crewmember license and permit fees collected by the Department of Fish and Game and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. Sixty percent of these license and permit fees are dedicated to the Disabled Fishermen's Fund. From crewmember licenses, which are $30 and $90 for residents and non-residents, respectively, the Fund collected $994,800 in FY95. From permits issued, at $30 and $90 again, the Fund collected another $396,100, for a total of $1,390,000 in FY95.

At the close of FY95, the Fund contained $7,367,700. The total number of claims submitted for review in FY95 was 1,237. FY95 Actuals reflect that the total amount of claims paid was $339,400, while FY95 Authorized amount for claims was $1,063,300.

In FY97, the Governor requests $1,039,400 for the grants line as payment of benefits to individuals, and estimates that 2,300 claims will be submitted. The increase in expected claims is due to an effort to increase awareness of the Fund via a broader distribution of Fishermen's Fund booklets and general information in FY97.

The Department of Labor has calculated that 64% of claims submitted resulted in payment in FY93, and estimated that the claim payment rate has increased a bit since then, due to improved database tracking. The remaining claims are rejected or pended for receipt of further information.

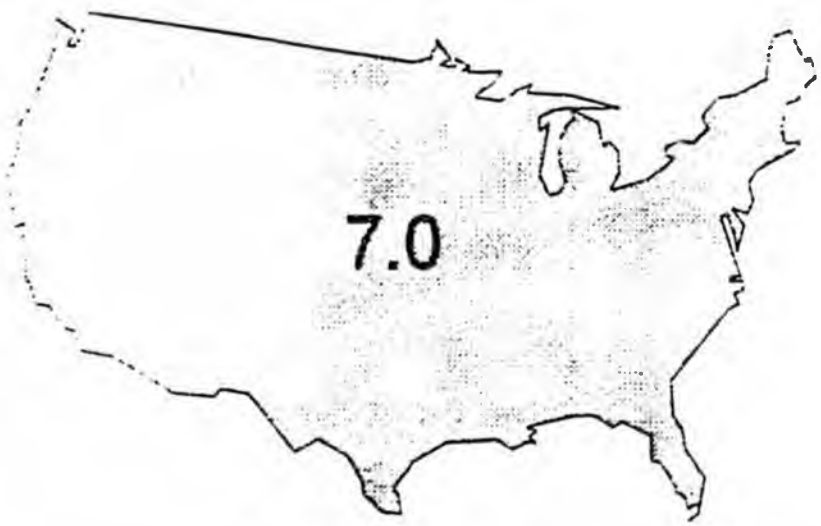
As you know, the interested earned by the Disabled Fishermen's Fund does not return to the Fund itself, but instead is deposited in the General Fund. The Treasury Management Division in the Department of Revenue does not separately track interest earned on funds that deposit earnings into the general fund, but has prepared a fiscal note to estimate the effects of HB366. The Division estimates that $200,000 would be available for appropriation if half of the Fund's earnings are to be redirected from the General Fund.

I hope this information proves useful to you. Please call if you have any questions.

Hesterman — Army

Occupational Fatality Rates per 100,000 Workers

(Alaska only)

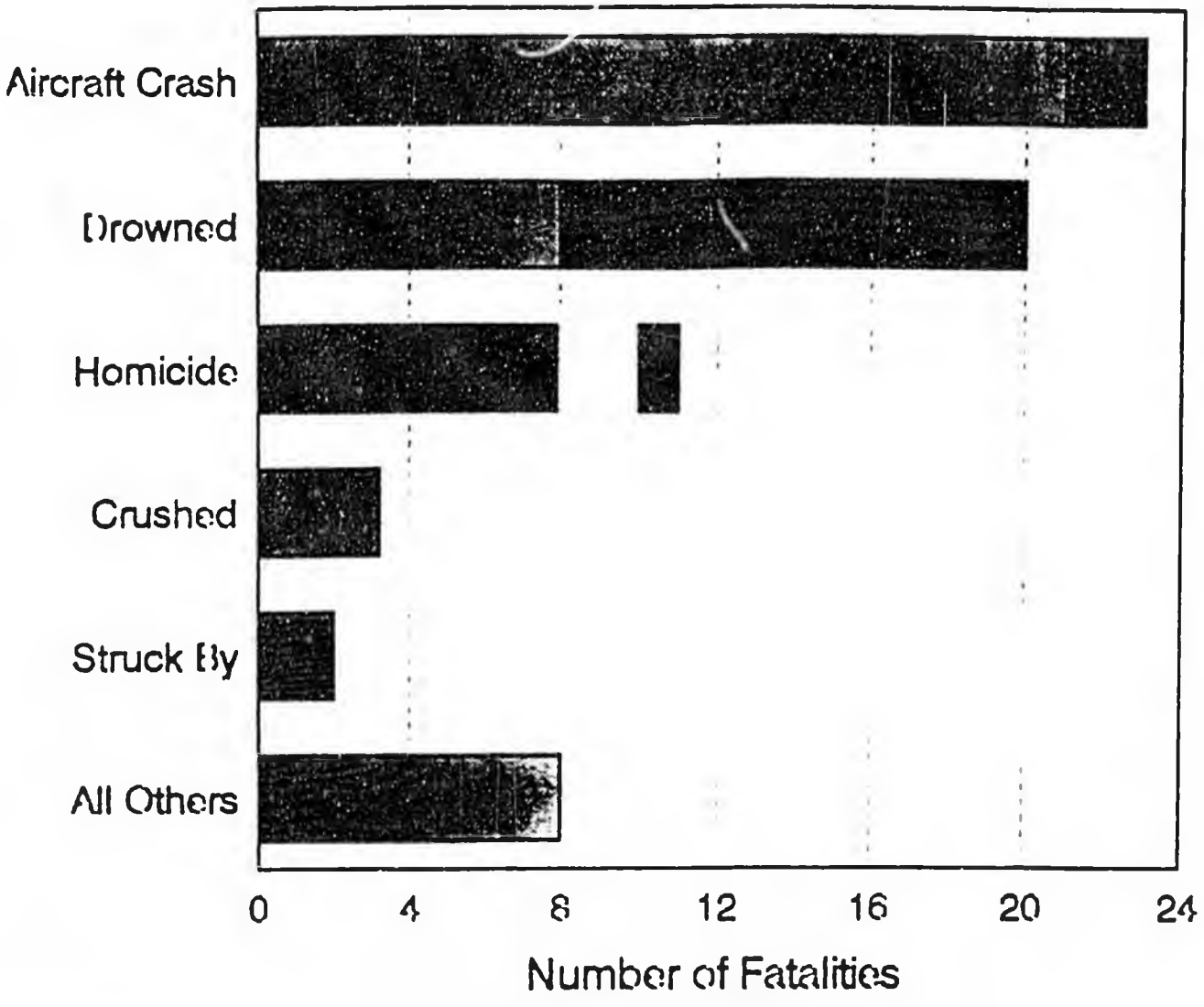


(includes all 50 states)

SOURCE: NIOSH, National Traumatic Occupational Fatalities Database, 1980--1989

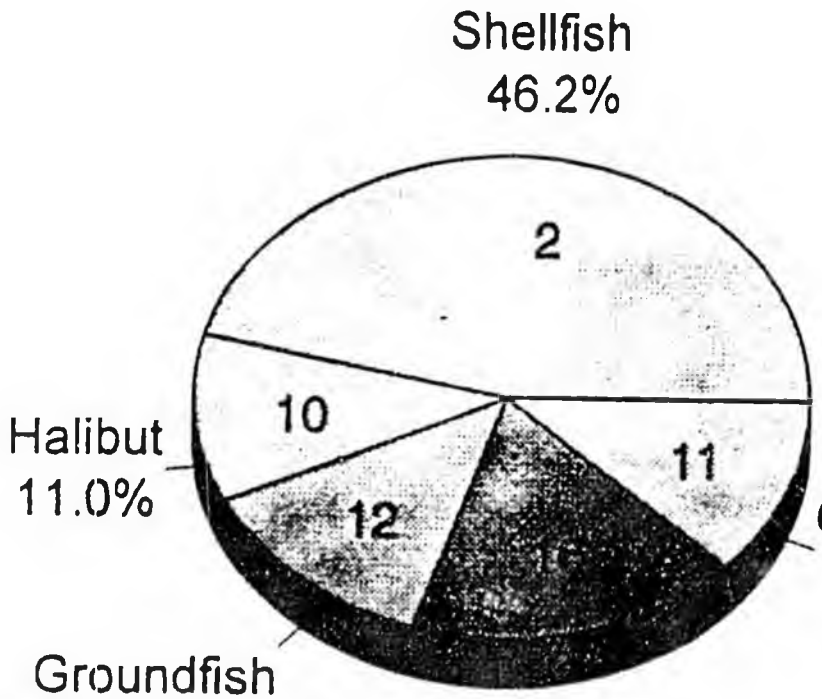
OCCUPATIONAL FATALITY REPORT

Occupational Fatalities by Circumstance of Death, Alaska, 1993, N=67



CDC

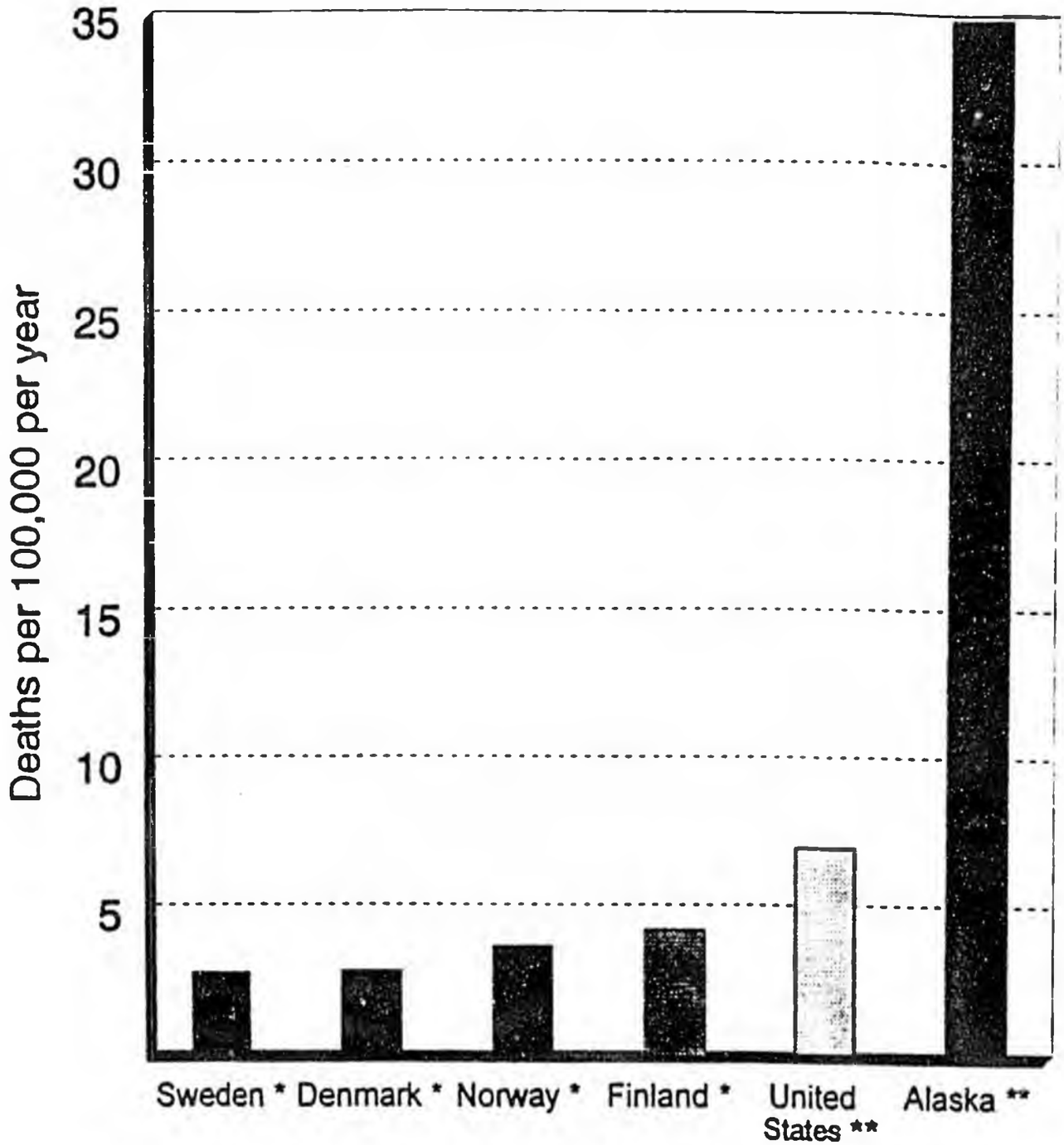
Commercial Fisherman Fatalities by Fishery, Alaska, 1991--1993, N=91



(Includes sea cucumbers [2] and unknowns [9])

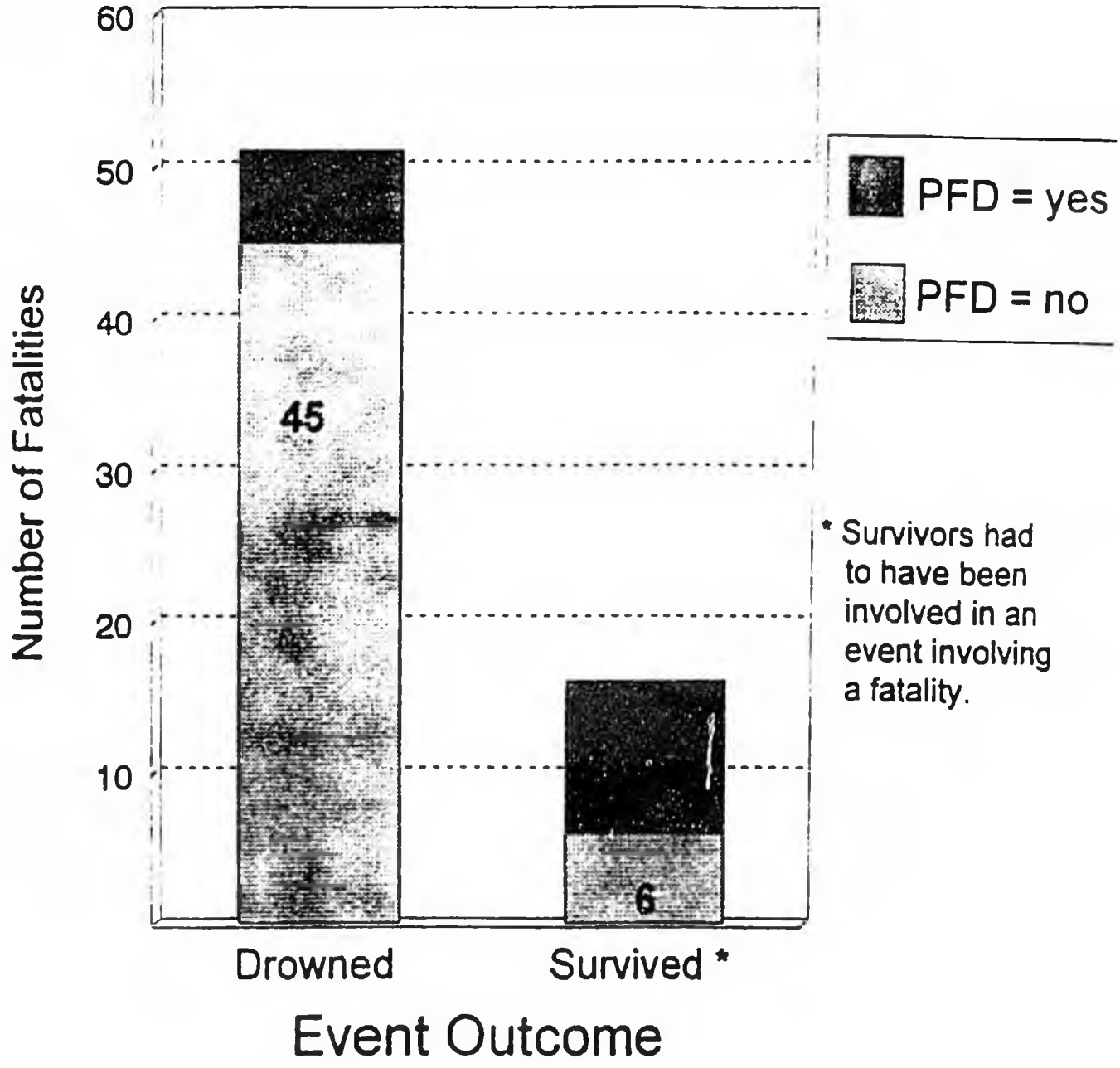
The shellfish fishery accounts for the most deaths of all Alaskan fisheries.

Occupational Fatality Rate Comparison



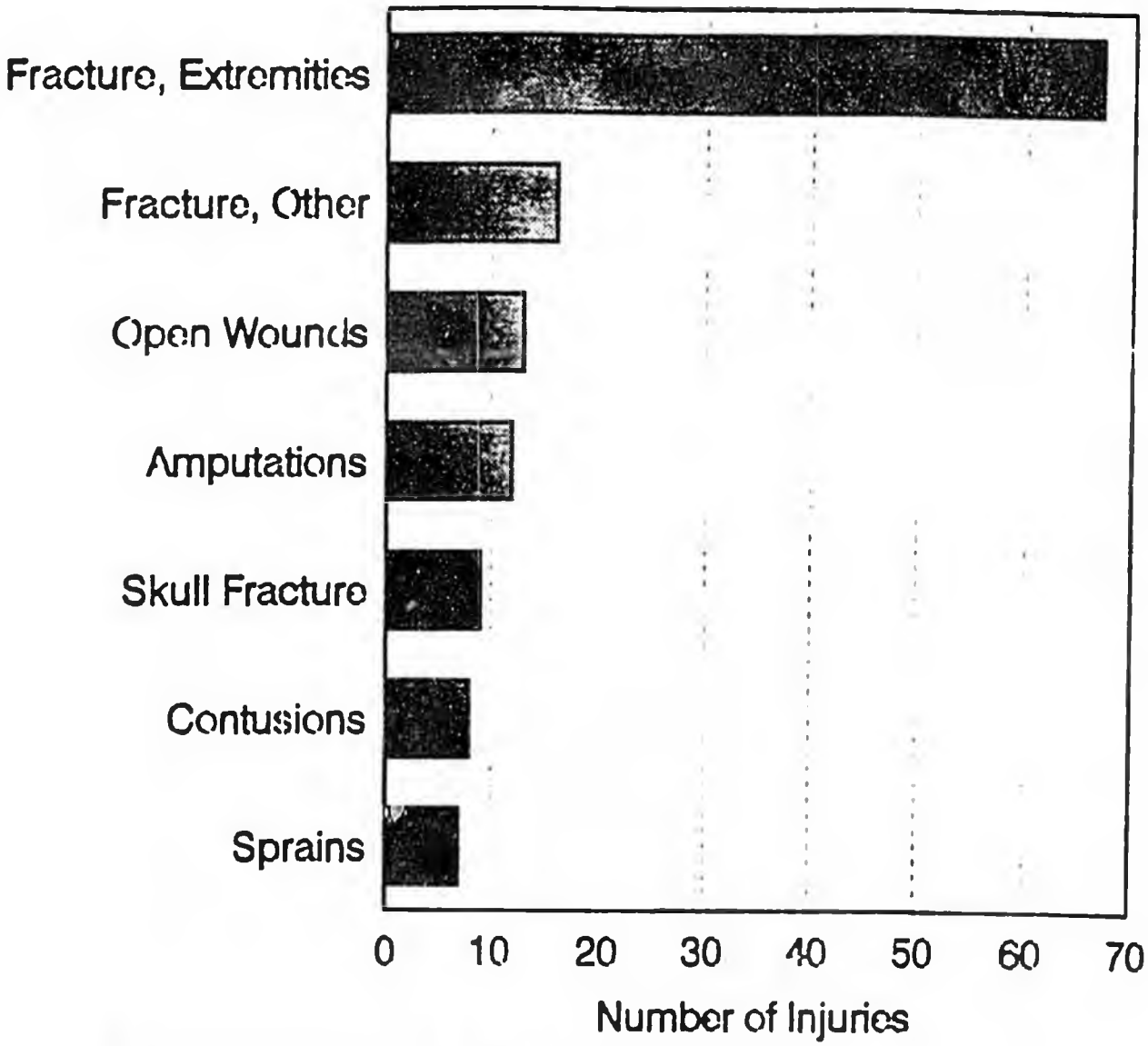
* SOURCE: Arbejdstilsynet, The Danish Working Environment Service, 1980-1989, Copenhagen, 1993
** SOURCE: National Traumatic Occupational Fatality Surveillance System, NIOSH, CDC, 1980-1989

Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Usage in Fatal Incidents in the Commercial Fishing Industry, Alaska, 1991--1993



Having worn a PFD protected against drowning in incidents resulting in at least one fatality.

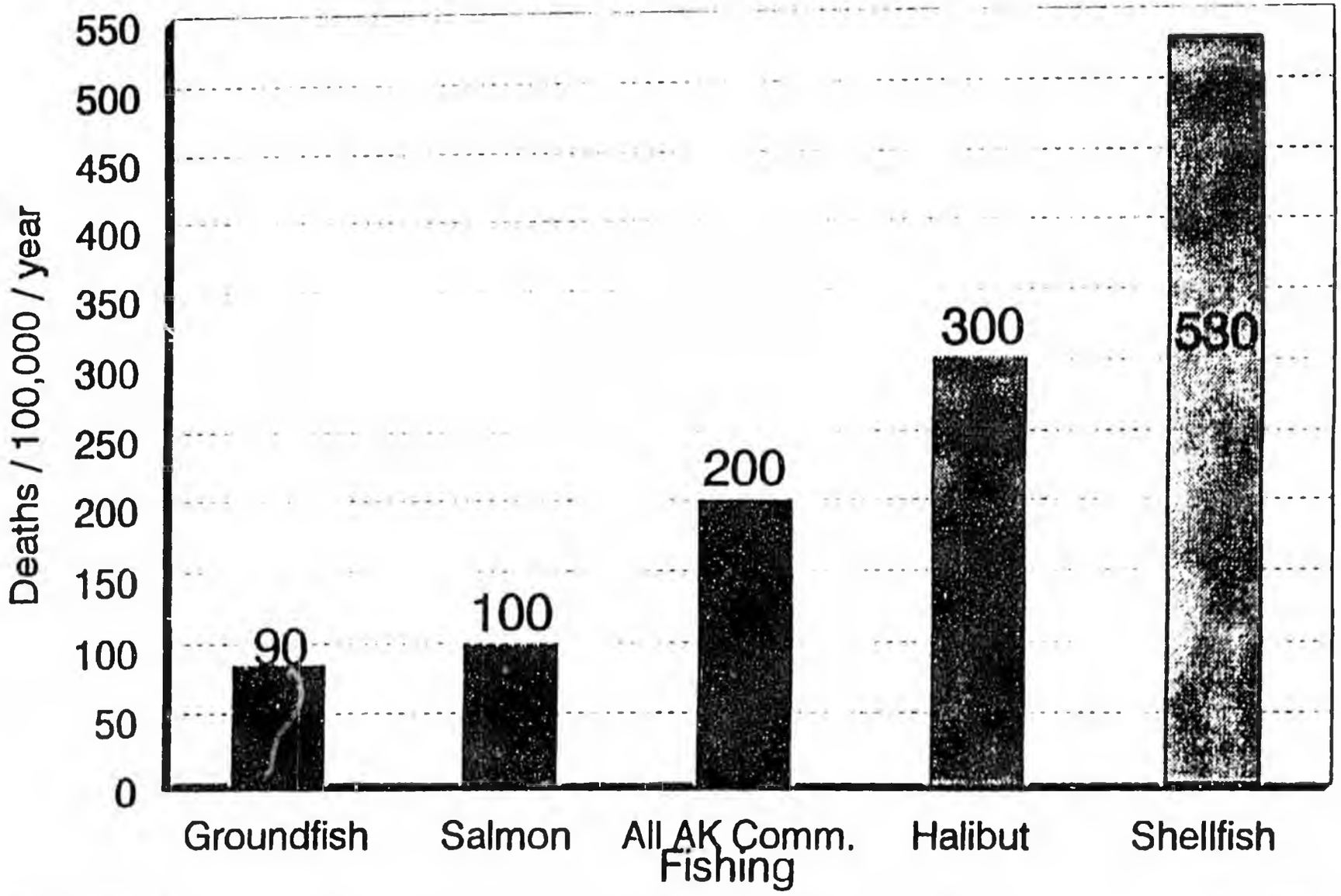
Commercial Fishing Injury Description, Alaska, 1991-1993



*Includes 31 workers with other injury descriptions.

Fractures of the extremities were the most common injuries.

Occupational Fatality Rates by Fishery, Alaska, 1991 and 1992
(rates are calculated using full-time employment equivalents)



SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH

CDC

9727 Wren Lane
Eagle River, AK 99577

Constituent

September 26, 1995

Representative Pete Kott
State Capitol
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182

Dear Representative Kott:

You frequently send newsletters asking for my views on a variety of topics, and today I have some input for you. I have worked for the U.S. Public Health Service for the past 24 years, 16 of which have been in Alaska. I have a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Public Health. I recently completed a research project that might be of interest to you. The research project evaluated a marine safety training program that is conducted by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA). This research paper will be published in the national peer review journal, Public Health Reports, in the November/December issue in 1995. The paper was also selected as one of 300 out of 900 papers for oral presentation at the World Injury Control Conference in Melbourne, Australia in February 1996.

The bottom line according to my research is that the AMSEA program is very effective in preventing deaths among the fishermen who took the course. The distressing point is that AMSEA relies entirely on short term grants for their funding. We need to support this effective program with recurring funding from the State. The funding could and should come from excess revenues of the Fishermen's Fund. This money originally came from the fishermen and AMSEA directly benefits the fishermen.

I realize their are obstacles to overcome in order to be able to use this excess funding but please see if it can be accomplished.

Thank you for your time and interest. If I can answer any questions, please call.

Ron Perkins

Ron Perkins, MPH
Tel 273-0102

LETTER FROM RON PERKINS WITH THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

October 13, 1995

Governor Tony Knowles
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Knowles,

You might remember during a campaign trip to Kodiak at the time of our annual Crab Festival, that you were involved in one of the highlights of our festivities, the survival suit race. You might also remember the frustration you experienced when getting into your suit during the race. (I'm the gal that was helping you.) I am pleased to let you know that this past year one of the Kodiak High School teams won the race. This is the first time in years that the United States Coast Guard team did not win. Needless to say the Kodiak High School students are very proud of this accomplishment and they intend to do their best at keeping the trophy this coming year. So what is this all leading up to?

I teach Marine and Wilderness Survival Training as well as Fisheries Science at Kodiak High School. I am also an instructor for the ALASKA MARINE SAFETY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, and include this training as part of my high school curriculum. At the present time I have 50 students involved in this training and have trained 40 other students as well as 40 adults in the past two years.

AMSEA is facing a major loss of funding from the Federal Government this year and I am very concerned about the future of AMSEA. AMSEA has provided invaluable training to the members of our community as well as members of many maritime dependent communities around the state and the nation. AMSEA has proven itself a leader in marine safety training and has filled a need in Alaska's maritime industries. Federal Regulations have made this type of training mandatory for persons onboard all commercial vessels. The healthy future of AMSEA and its ability to continue to provide this training depends on continued funding from somewhere. We are looking to the State of Alaska to help us with that funding.

I am asking you to please support reliable long term state funding of the AMSEA Program. I have read the proposal of using interest money from the Fishermen's Fund to support AMSEA and think this would be a fine way to use those resources. AMSEA is saving fishermen and fisherwoman's lives as well as lives of those involved in other

LETTER FROM JANE EISEMANN,
AMSEA INSTRUCTOR

marine related industries. AMSEA could help you become a condender in the 1996 Kodiak Crab Festival Survival Suit races. We sincerely invite you to be a member of one our teams. We also sincerely thank you for your consideration towards this very important matter.

Hope to see you this spring!

Jane Eisemann
Kodiak High School Fisheries Instructor

cc/ Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer
Jerry Dzugan Director AMSEA

Marine Safety Equipment

October 10, 1995

Governor Tony Knowles
c/o Mary McDowell
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Knowles,

Allow me to introduce myself I am Ted Rogers, owner of Joycrafts Marine Safety Equipment in Kodiak. The business I run is a retail and service oriented business, specializing in mariner's safety needs and training. More specifically, I service life-saving equipment for the fishing fleets of Alaska.

Several years ago I became involved in the training aspect of my business, recognizing that the best equipment was of little use in an emergency situation if proper training was neglected. The A.M.S.E.A. (Alaska Marine Safety Education Association) program was already in place, and recognized nationally by many organizations, such as U.S.M.S.A. (U.S. Marine Safety Association, an equipment manufacturers association), and highly regarded for excellence in training of mariner's safety, and survival at sea. I became an A.M.S.E.A. Instructor after attending their Instructor Training coarse. I then incorporated it's cirnculum into my overall program of safety services, and have been involved with teaching fishermen safety courses ever since.

Alaska Marine Safety Education Association training has been directly responsible for the saving of many lives already in it's short history. I know, because many of my students, are also my customers. I am on the ground level with these people, and they return to tell me their stories. Many comment on their training, and credit their A.M.S.E.A. instruction for their learned skills, which were used during their ordeals.

In short, A.M.S.E.A. has made a very real and significant impact on our fishing community, not only in Kodiak, not only in Alaska, but even nation-wide. The A.M.S.E.A. contribution to mariner safety and survival has had far-reaching influence, all for the benefit of our industry and communities. It is also responsible for putting Alaska in a position of prominence in the maritime safety community.

As I am sure you are aware, A.M.S.E.A. is a nonprofit organization, and will be losing a significant portion of it's funding this year. This vital organization needs to secure a source of stable long-term funding to continue their much needed services. It has been suggested that support could come from interest accrued from the Fishermen's Fund. A portion of the interest which is rolled into the state's general fund could be used for support. It seems only fitting that an organization whose main concerns for fishermen's safety, through teaching a "pro-active approach of prevention and preparedness", should receive it's support from the Fishermen's Fund earnings. Keeping it within the industry that supports it.

A.M.S.E.A. has been tremendous resource of fishing vessel safety information, and it's staff has done an excellent job of disbursing that information. Getting the skills training to those that need it, effectively and efficiently. I am proud to be a part of that fine network as an instructor, and encourage you to assist in finding the long term funding necessary to continue their fine work.

Thank you in advance for your support

Sincerely,

Ted E. Rogers

445 Shahafka Circle Box [redacted] Fax (907) 486-2984

LETTER FROM TED ROGERS, OWNER OF JOYCRAFT MARINE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Marine Safety Equipment

October 10,1995

Representative Alan Austerman
112 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Dear Representative Austerman,

I am attaching a copy of a letter that I have mailed to Governor Knowles' office. As you will read, it is a matter of concern to me. The A.M.S.E.A. (Alaska Marine Safety Education Association) program is in need of finding some long term , stable funding in order to keep the organization the healthy, viable, dynamic program that it is.

Although A M S E A is located in Sitka, they have had a great influence on our community and the Alaskan fishing industry. I am a U.S.C.G. Approved , Certified A.M.S.E.A. Instructor, and as such have been able to teach the A.M S E A Marine Safety curriculum to many fishermen in the Kodiak fishing fleet. I have taught the classes privately at Joycrafts, taken the classes to the villages of Ouzinkie, Port Lions and Old Harbor , and taught various segments of the classes at the Kodiak College in conjunction with Kodiak Fishermen's Wives and Associates. I'm sure you have been made aware of the facts, of how much impact that training has had upon the safety of our fishing fleet in just the last couple of years. It's been dramatic! Lives lost because of vessel casualties has decreased considerably.

I urge you to support any means you can to seek long term stable funding for A.M.S.E.A. Our fishing fleet has benefited from AMSEA's existence , our community has benefited, our children have reaped the benefits, and our national fishing fleet have reaped benefits.

If I can be of more help to you in providing information please contact me.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Ted E. Rogers

Ted E. Rogers

445 Shahafka Circle Box 2396 Kodiak, Alaska 99615 (907) 486-6293 Fax (907) 486-2984

907-486-3910
Box 991

Alaska Draggers Association

Kodiak, Alaska
99615

FAX 486-8292

October 12, 1995

Governor Tony Knowles
c/o Mary McDowell
P O. Box 110001
Juneau. Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Knowles,

I am writing to express our continued support for the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA) and to suggest a source of funding to continue its efforts to reduce loss of life in the fishing industry

We have been strong supporters and advocates of AMSEA since it's inception nine years ago During that time AMSEA has never received any direct funding from the State, but has relied on grant funding from federal sources and income generated through it's extensive offerings of classes to fishermen. AMSEA's budget was cut over 75% last year by Congress and sources of other grant funds have dried up due to budget cuts. We are very concerned about AMSEA's future as an ongoing source of safety training for fishermen.

The fishing industry by their own initiative contributes a portion of their license fees to the Fisherman's Fund to defray costs of injuries occurring within state waters That fund has now grown to 7 2 million dollars, but the more than $300,000 annual interest on the fund is deposited to the General Fund, rather than to programs that can further reduce injuries and loss of life in our dangerous industry.

We propose that a percentage of that interest be "earmarked" on a year to year basis for support of AMSEA. We recognize that by state law funds cannot be "dedicated" to any source, but that the legislature can earmark funds as we propose This funding would in no way jeopardize the principal or viability of the Fisherman's Fund, and in fact, the effort would help the state to be more categorically responsible for the use of its revenues The money for the Fishermen's Fund is generated by the fishing industry, and this proposed use of the income from the Fund would directly benefit the industry in assuring the continued viability of the successful, effective, and important AMSEA safety program

Sincerely,

Al Burch
Executive Director

Jay E. Stinson
President

cc: Fred Zharoff, Allen Austerman, AMSEA

Harvesting Alaskan Shrimp and Whitefish

LETTER FROM ALASKA DRAGGERS ASSOCIATION

STATE OF ALASKA
1996 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO: HB366

Revision Date: January 12, 1996
Dept. Affected: Revenue
Title: An act relating to marine safety training and education programs
BRU:
Component:
Sponsor: DHSS Committee
Requestor: Rep. Austerman
COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )						

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY96) cost $

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS:
Earnings on the Fisherman's Fund currently are left with the General Fund and do not belong to the fund.
Based upon the assumptions disclosed below, $200,000 would be available for appropriation each year. While the funding source would clearly be the General Fund, it is difficult to determine which Department should reflect the fiscal impact as the bill does not address who the granting agency would be.

ASSUMPTIONS:
Current balance is $8.1 million. As the fund is actively encouraging claims from fisherman, we have assumed that the fund will simply remain stable at $8.0 million. The interest rate assumption used is 5%. Interest on $8.0 million at 5% would be $400,000 annually. One-half of this amount would then be $200,000.

Prepared by: Betty Martin, Comptroller
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Division: Treasury
Date: 1/12/96
Approved by Commissioner: Ron A. Kenney
Date: 1/12/96
Agency: Department of Revenue

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HB 366

Hospitalized and Fatal Commercial Fishing Injuries in Alaska.

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Alaska Department of Health & Social Services

Introduction:

There is a growing national awareness of the hazards associated with commercial fishing and processing in the United States. The National Research Council, Committee on Fishing Vessel Safety, reports that each year an average of 250 fishing vessels are lost along the Atlantic, Gulf, Pacific, and Alaska coasts, and over 100 fishers lose their lives in vessel related incidents[1] These fatalities reflect a high rate of occurrence relative to other occupations. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that from 1987 through 1991 an average of 42 vessels and 36 commercial fishers were lost off Alaska's coasts each year.[2]

In response to a public outcry about these tragedies, in 1988, the U.S. Congress passed the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act, and the U.S. Coast Guard has recently developed regulations requiring minimum safety equipment, stability testing, and crew training for commercial fishing vessels, based on size and fishing areas.[3]

It is too early to determine how effective these new laws will be in helping reduce the numbers of fatalities resulting from commercial fishing mishaps, but focusing only on fatalities does not give a complete picture of the hazards faced by commercial fishers and fish processors.

Until now, little information has been available on non-fatal injuries in the commercial fishing industry. This is because there has been no single data source for collecting statistics on fishing related injuries. Most injuries occurring on land, including shore based fish processing, are reported to the state worker's compensation system, but this system does not cover most injuries occurring off shore.

Under the Alaska Worker's Compensation Law (AS 23.30), commercial fishers are excluded from coverage. However, there is an Alaska Fishermen's Fund for some injured commercial fishers which pays up to $ 2,500 per occurrence for emergency medical treatment. These data also are limited and are not adequate for epidemiologic surveillance. Other commercial fishing ventures, such as factory trawlers or floating processors, may be covered under Worker's Compensation or under protection and indemnity insurance under the Jones Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1920. Finally, Native Alaskans usually are covered for medical treatment through the Indian Health Service. Using third party payor information to track fishing industry injuries is virtually impossible, because these data sources generally are incomplete, inconsistent, and often difficult to obtain.[4]

By law, any injury which requires professional medical treatment beyond first aid, should be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard. However, Coast Guard officials admit that their data often is scanty and incomplete.[5]

To get a more complete overview of serious injuries and fatalities in the Alaska commercial fishing and processing industries, data from the Alaska Trauma Registry is analyzed. The Alaska Trauma Registry is a surveillance system of injuries resulting in hospitalization or death. The purpose of the registry is to help medical care providers to evaluate the quality of trauma care, and to record information on causes and severity of injuries, and other factors, in order to target prevention strategies.

The Alaska Trauma Registry began as a pilot project involving seven hospitals in southcentral Alaska in March, 1988. By July, 1990, the project had expanded to a statewide registry with the voluntary participation of all twenty-five of Alaska's acute care hospitals.

The criteria for inclusion in the trauma registry are trauma patients with injuries described by ICD-9-CM codes 800.00 - 959.9 and victims of the effects of reduced temperature (991.0 -991.9), lightning (994), drowning and near drowning (994.1), strangulation (994.7), and electrocution (994.8), that are admitted to a hospital, transferred to a higher level of acute care, or declared dead in the emergency department. Vital statistics data, on fatalities of persons who did not get transferred to a hospital, are added to the database.

Data is abstracted from hospital medical records after patient discharge. Each record has 132 data elements which include information on prehospital and in-hospital response times and treatment, severity of injury, demographic factors, method of payment, length of stay, and discharge conditions.

Reports are sent quarterly to hospital quality assurance/improvement committees and, recently, to ambulance services and medical directors. Trauma Registry data also include ICD-9-CM E-Codes and a short narrative on the circumstances of injury, as well as other information, such as whether the injury was work related.

The primary objectives of this study are:

1) To describe the injury problem in the Alaska commercial fishing and processing industry using Alaska Trauma Registry data on hospitalized trauma patients, plus data on fatalities;

2) To illustrate the importance of using trauma registry data for injury surveillance and in targeting injury prevention and control strategies for the commercial fishing and processing industry.

Methods

This study analyzes commercial fishing and processing related injuries in Alaska for those injuries serious enough to require transport to an Anchorage hospital, from March, 1988 through February, 1992 (four years). The three main hospitals in Anchorage provide the most sophisticated trauma care services in the state, including neurosurgery, and most serious injuries from coastal regions of Alaska, except southeast Alaska, are transported or transferred to an Anchorage facility. Southeast Alaska fishing industry injuries and fatalities are analyzed separately for the period from July 1, 1990 through December 31, 1991. This is because southeast Alaska facilities did not join the trauma registry until July, 1990.

Data are analyzed by major fishing region, patient residence, major cause of injury, body parts injured, severity of injury, cost of hospitalization, length of stay, and discharge status.

Results

A total of 329 fishing industry injuries were transferred to an Anchorage hospital during the four year study period. Of these, well over one-half occurred in the Aleutian-Pribilof region of Alaska, and over 60 percent of the injured workers were out of state residents.

Among the non-fatal injuries, the most common cause were machinery (40.5%), falls (23.3%), and other (24.1%). Among fatal injuries the overwhelming cause is drowning (94% in 1992).

Analysis of body parts injured shows that upper extremities (37.3%) and lower extremities (25.3%) are the most common body parts injured. Approximately 9% received a brain or spinal cord injury.

Looking at the Abbreviated Injury Scale (AIS), which has a range of one to six, 29.2% had injuries scored at AIS 3 or greater, which are serious or critical injuries. Among those injuries determined to be fom

fish harvesting activities, in approximately one-half the cases the type of fishing was determined. Of these, crabbing was the most common fishery resulting in injuries, followed by trawling. Seiners, gillnetters, and longliners had significantly fewer injuries.

The overwhelming majority of cases were discharged home, with only 2.4% transferred to another acute care facility and .9% transferred to a rehabilitation facility.

The minimum length of hospital stay was one day (minimum criteria for inclusion in the database) and the maximum was 64 days. The average length of hospital stay was 7 days.

Minimum hospital charges were $ 581.00, and maximum charges were $ 159,215.00. Average hospital charges were $ 12,286.00 per case.

Analyzing southeast Alaska Trauma Registry data separately, for the period July 1, 1990 through December 31, 1991, only 33 fishing industry injury cases were identified. Southeast Alaska generally has some different types of fisheries not usually found in other parts of the state, such as power trolling and hand trolling. Southeast Alaska also has some crabbing and shrimping, longlining, seining, and gillnetting.

Among the non-fatal injuries in southeast Alaska, the most common causes were machinery (30.3%), other and unspecified water transport (15.2%), piercing or cutting (15.2%), submersion (9.1%), and falls (9.1%).

Analysis of body parts injured shows that upper extremities (45.5%), trunk injuries (15.2%), and lower extremities (12.1%) are the most common body parts injured, followed by brain injuries (9%), and spinal injuries (3%). Looking at the AIS scores, 12.1% had injuries classified as AIS 3 or greater.

Type of fishing was not determined for the 33 cases from southeast Alaska.

Twenty-five patients were discharged home, and eight patients were transferred to another acute care facility. The minimum length of hospital stay was one day, and the maximum was 29 days. The average hospital stay for the southeast Alaska patients was 3.9 days. Minimum hospital charges were $ 1,352.00 and the maximum charges were $ 11,923.00. Average hospital charges were $ 5,178 per patient.

Conclusion

The Alaska commercial fishing and processing industry is the most dangerous industry in the nation. Preliminary analysis of Alaska Trauma Registry data shows that it can be a powerful tool for injury surveillance including information on causes, severity, demographic factors, costs, length of stay, and outcomes of persons who receive injuries serious enough to result in hospitalization or death.

Using this information, injury prevention strategies can be developed. For example, the number of head injuries resulting from crabbing and other pot fishing suggests that fishers should wear hard hats while on the decks of these vessels. The number of falls on some of these vessels suggests that non-skid surfaces and other fall prevention interventions should be considered.

Further studies of commercial fishing and processing injuries should include denominator information on the number of persons involved in each fishing and processing activity, and the average number of days a year that persons are employed in these industries. This will enable the calculation of rates of injuries for each activity.

Based on this preliminary analysis, it appears that certain fisheries, such as crabbing and trawling, tend to be more dangerous than other fisheries, such as gillnetting and trolling. It also appears that fishing industry injuries occurring in other parts of Alaska tend to be more severe than injuries occurring in southeast Alaska.

The Alaska Trauma Registry is the best single source of surveillance information on commercial fishing industry related injuries in Alaska. When combined with other available data sources, it can be an even more powerful tool.

References:

1. Fishing Vessel Safety: Blueprint for a National Program;
Committee on Fishing Vessel Safety; Marine Board; Commission of Engineering and Technical Systems; National Research Council; National Academy Press. Washington, D.C. 1991 (p.xv).

2. Beating the Odds on the North Pacific: A Guide to Fishing Safety;
Alaska Sea Grant College Program; Marine Advisory Bulletin No. 41; 1992 (p.v).

3. Ibid.

4. "Occupational Injury and Illness Rates in the Alaska Commercial Fishing Industry;" by Gunnar Knapp, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage; and Jennifer Christian, MD, Department of Health and Human Services, Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska, 1990.

5. Personal Communications with Glenn C. Sicks, Lt. Commander, U.S. Coast Guard, Seventeenth District Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator, Juneau, Alaska.

Commercial Fishing and Processing Injuries in Alaska
March, 1988 - February, 1992
Cause of Injury
N=328

Cause	No	%
Drown/Near Drown	6	1.8%
Falls	78	23.8%
Machinery	133	40.5%
Burns	11	3.3%
Other Injuries	79	24.1%
Object in eye	3	.9%
Struck	8	2.4%
Caught	1	.3%
Cut	9	2.7%
	328	100.0%

Body Part Injured
(pie chart)
N=328

Face/Head (non-brain injury)	27	8.2%
Neck, Spinal Cord Injury	8	2.4%
Upper Body Trunk	17	5.1%
Lower Body Trunk	12	3.7%
Upper Extremity	124	37.8%
Lower Extremity	83	25.3%
Head (brain injury)	20	6.1%
Other and Unspecified	23	7.0%
Heart and Lungs	3	.9%
Other Internal Organs	11	3.4%
	328	99.0%

Commercial Fishing and Processing Injuries in Alaska
March, 1988 - February, 1992
Abbreviated Injury Scale
N = 328

AIS	NO.	%
0	6	1.8%
1	42	12.8%
2	175	53.4%
2H	9	2.7%
3	68	20.7%
3H	23	7.0%
4	1	.3%
4H	3	.9%
5H	1	.3%
	328	100.0%

Commercial Fishing & Processing Injuries in Alaska
March, 1988 - February, 1992
Hospital Changes
Valid Cases 309

Minimum	$ 581.00
Maximum	$ 159,215.00
Total	$ 3,796,362.00
Average	$ 12,286.00

Commercial Fishing & Processing Injuries in Alaska
March, 1988 - February, 1992
Hospital Length of Stay
Valid Cases 326

Minimum	1 day
Maximum	64 days
Total	2,309 days
Average	7 days

Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
N = 33

- 33 injuries (30 male, 3 female)
- Race - (19 white, 5 Alaska Native, 1 Asian, 1 Pacific Islander, 7 unknown).
- Discharge Status (25 home, 8 another acute care facility).
- Residence (23 Southeast Alaska, 10 outside Alaska).

Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
ICD - 9 - CM E-Code
N = 33

E-Code	Cause	# of Injuries	%
830	Accident to watercraft causing submersion	3	9.1%
831	Accident to watercraft causing other injury	1	3.0%
832	Other accidental submersion or drowning in water trans.	1	3.0%
833	Fall on stairs or ladders in water trans.	1	3.0%
834	Other fall from one level to another in water trans.	2	6.1%
836	Machinery accident in water trans.	7	21.2%
837	Explosion, fire, or burning in watercraft	2	6.1%
838	Other and unspecified water transport accident	5	15.2%
887	Fracture, cause unspecific	1	3.0%
906	Other injury caused by animals	1	3.0%
916	Struck accidentally by falling object	1	3.0%
919	Agricultural machines	3	9.1%
920	Accidents caused by cutting or piercing instrument	5	15.2%
		33	100.0%

Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
ICD-9-CM N-Code
N = 33

N-Code	Body Part Injured	No.	%
801	Fracture of Base of Skull	1	3.0%
804	Multiple Fractures involving Skull or Face	1	3.0%
805	Fracture of Cerebral column with spinal injury	1	3.0%
808	Fracture of pelvis	2	6.1%
812	Fracture of humerus	2	6.1%
813	Fracture of radius and ulna	1	3.0%
815	Fracture of metacarpal bone(s)	2	6.1%
816	Fracture of one or more phalanges of hand	4	12.2%
824	Fracture of ankle	2	6.1%
844	Sprains and strains of knee and leg	1	3.0%
848	Other and ill defined sprains and strains	1	3.0%
850	Concussion	1	3.0%
883	Open wound of finger(s)	1	3.0%
886	Traumatic amputation of other finger(s)	4	12.2%
919	Superficial injury of other, multiple, and unspecified sites	1	3.0%
922	Contusion of trunk	2	6.1%
928	Crushing injury of lower limb	1	3.0%
942	Burn of trunk	1	3.0%
944	Burn of wrist(s) and hand(s)	1	3.0%
991	Effects of reduced temperature	1	3.0%
994	Effects of other external causes	2	6.1%
		33	100.0%

Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
N = 33

AIS	NO.	%
0	3	9.1%
1	7	21.2%
2	18	54.5%
2H	1	3.0%
3	2	6.1%
3H	1	3.0%
5H	1	3.0%
	33	100.0%

Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
Hospital Length of Stay
N = 33

Minimum	1 day
Maximum	29 days
Total	106 days
Mean	3.9 days

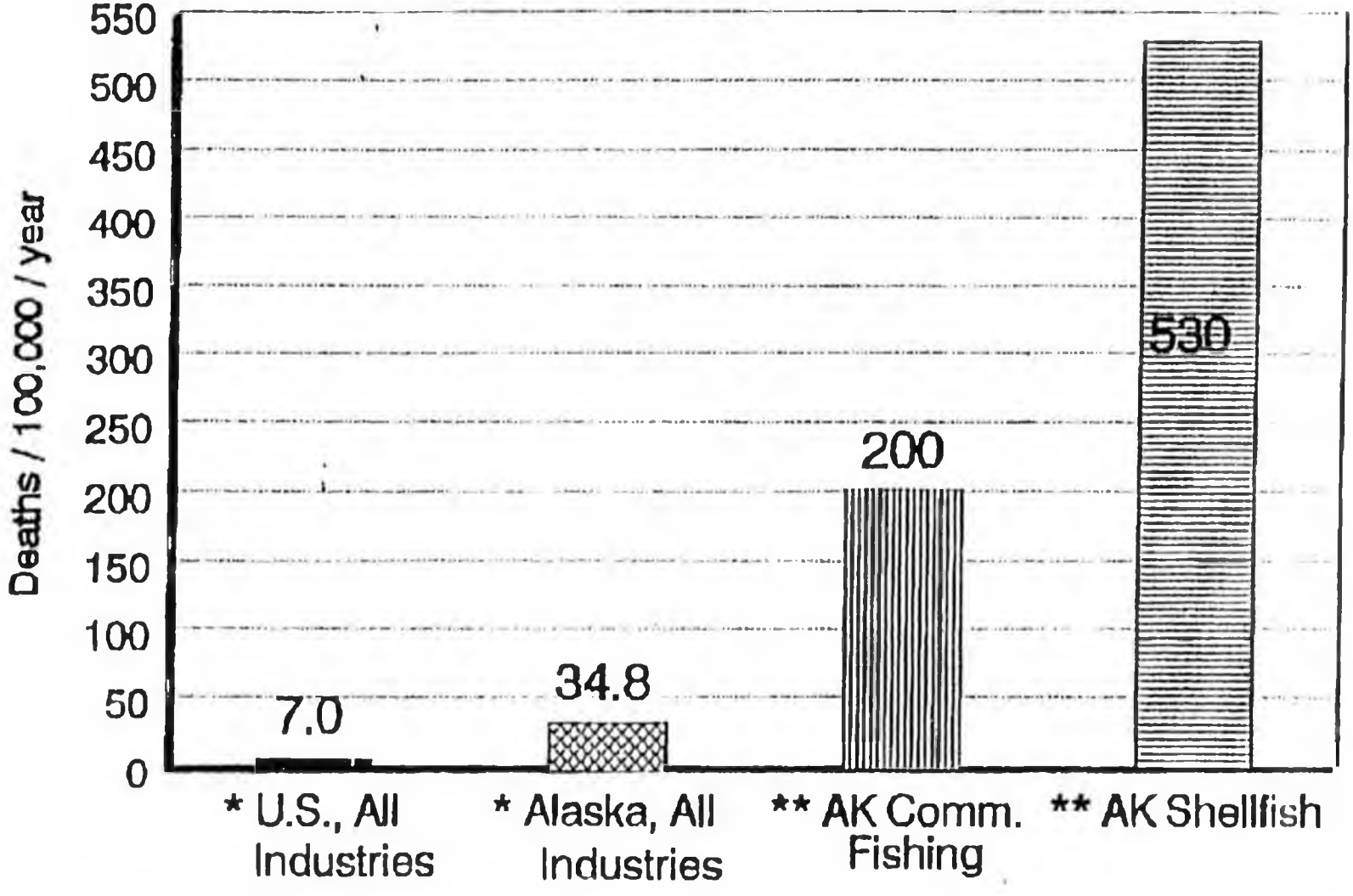
Commercial Fishing Injuries in Southeast Alaska
July 1, 1990 - December 31, 1991
N = 33

Hospital Charges

Minimum	$ 1,652.00
Maximum	$ 11,923.00
Total	$ 25,892.00
Average	$ 5,178.00

Occupational Fatality Rate Comparison, Alaska, 1991 and 1992

(rates for Alaska are for full time employment equivalents)

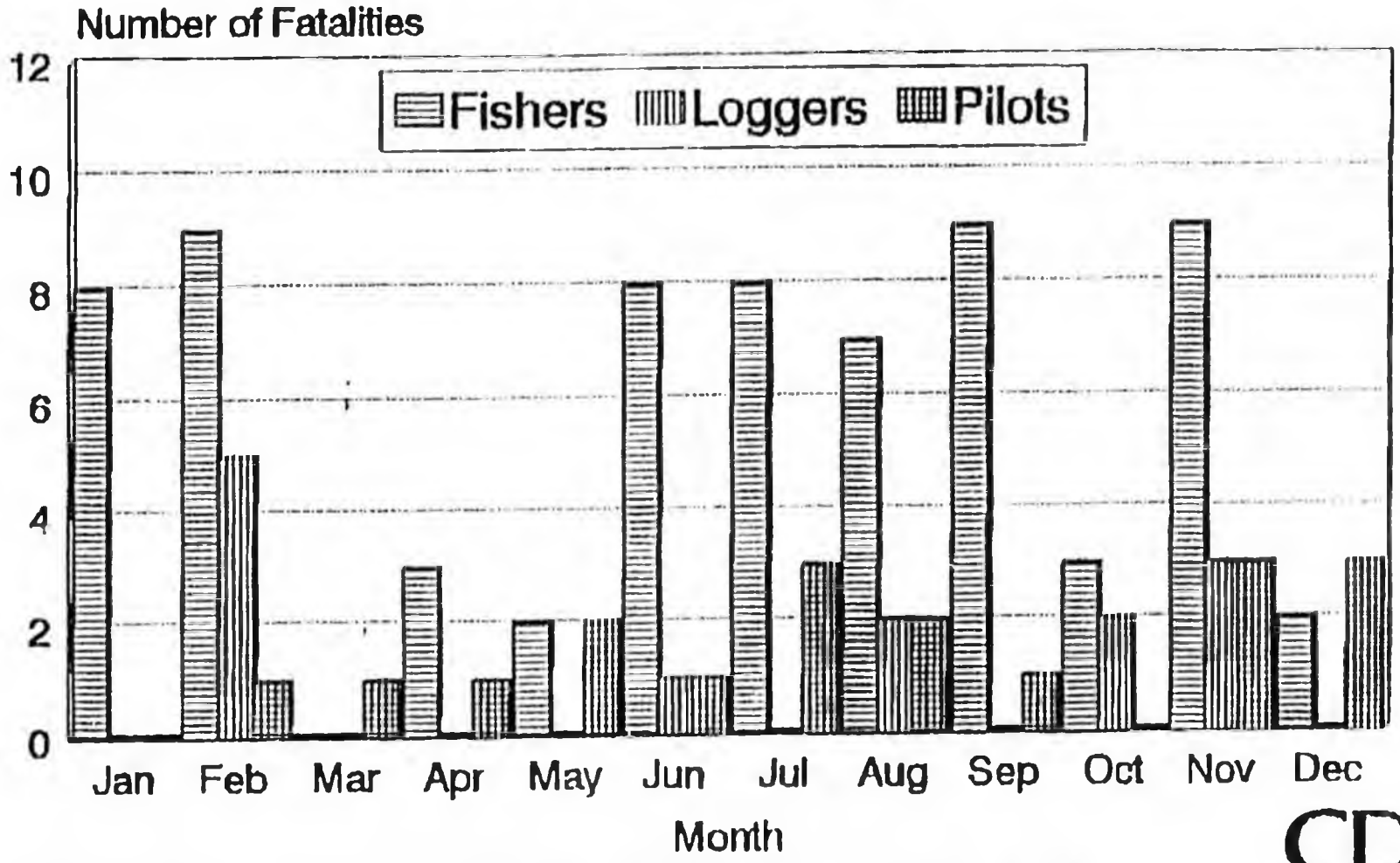


* SOURCE: US - NTOF, NIOSH, 1980-1989

** SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH, 1991-1992

CDC

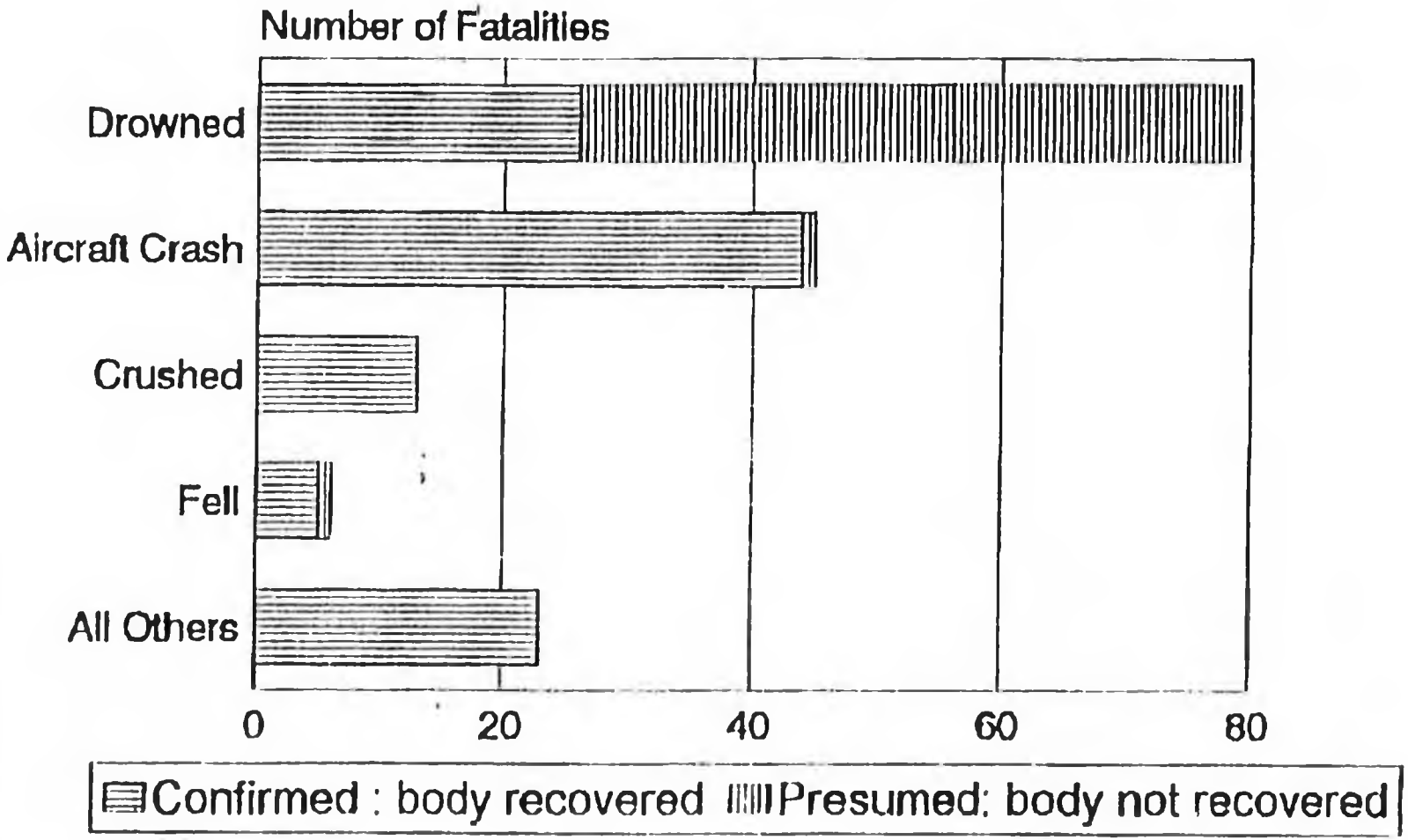
Fatalities in the 3 Highest Risk Occupations by Month of Occurrence, Alaska, 1991 - 1992, N=101



SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH

CDC

Occupational Fatalities by Circumstance of Death, 1991 and 1992, N=166



SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH

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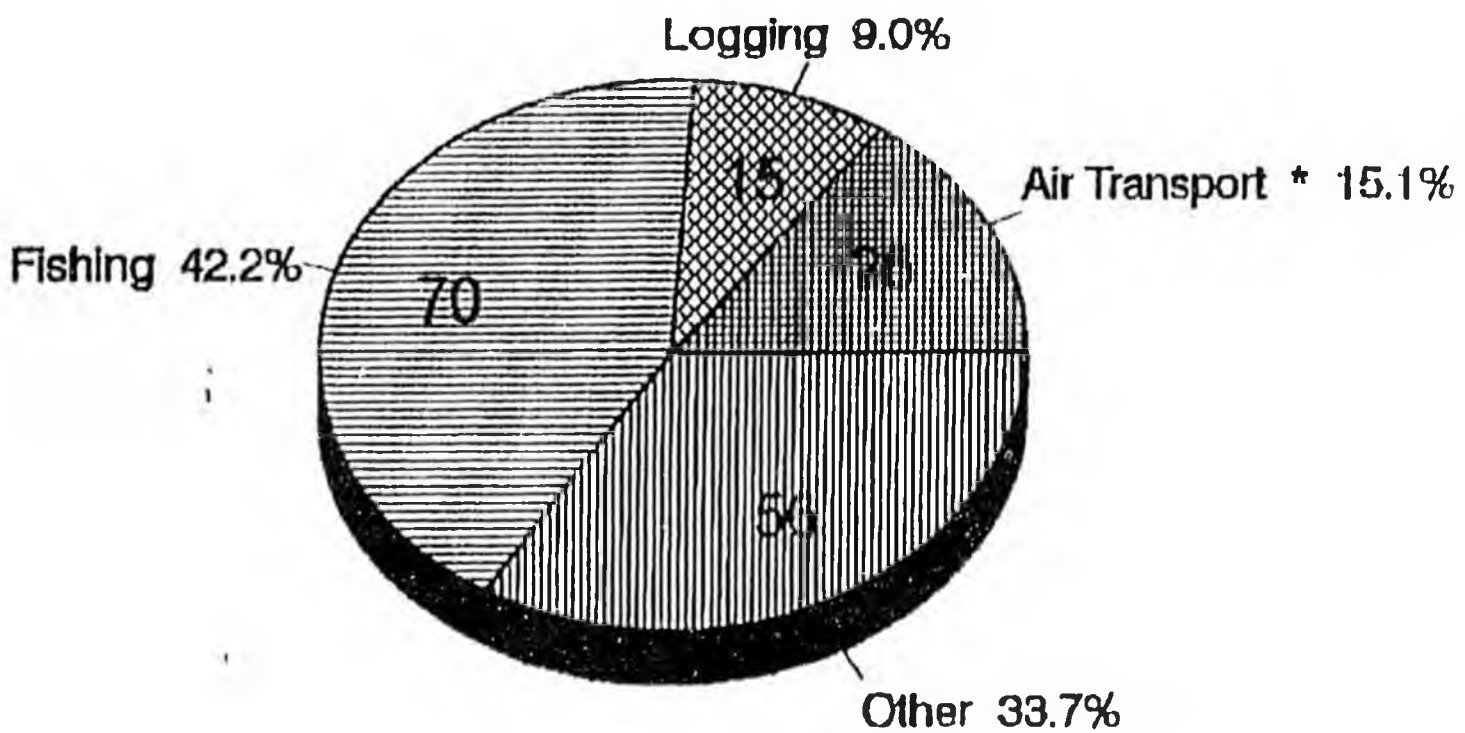
Fatalities in Alaska Industries, 1991 and 1992, N=166



* Excludes 20 workers from other industries killed in air crashes.

SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH

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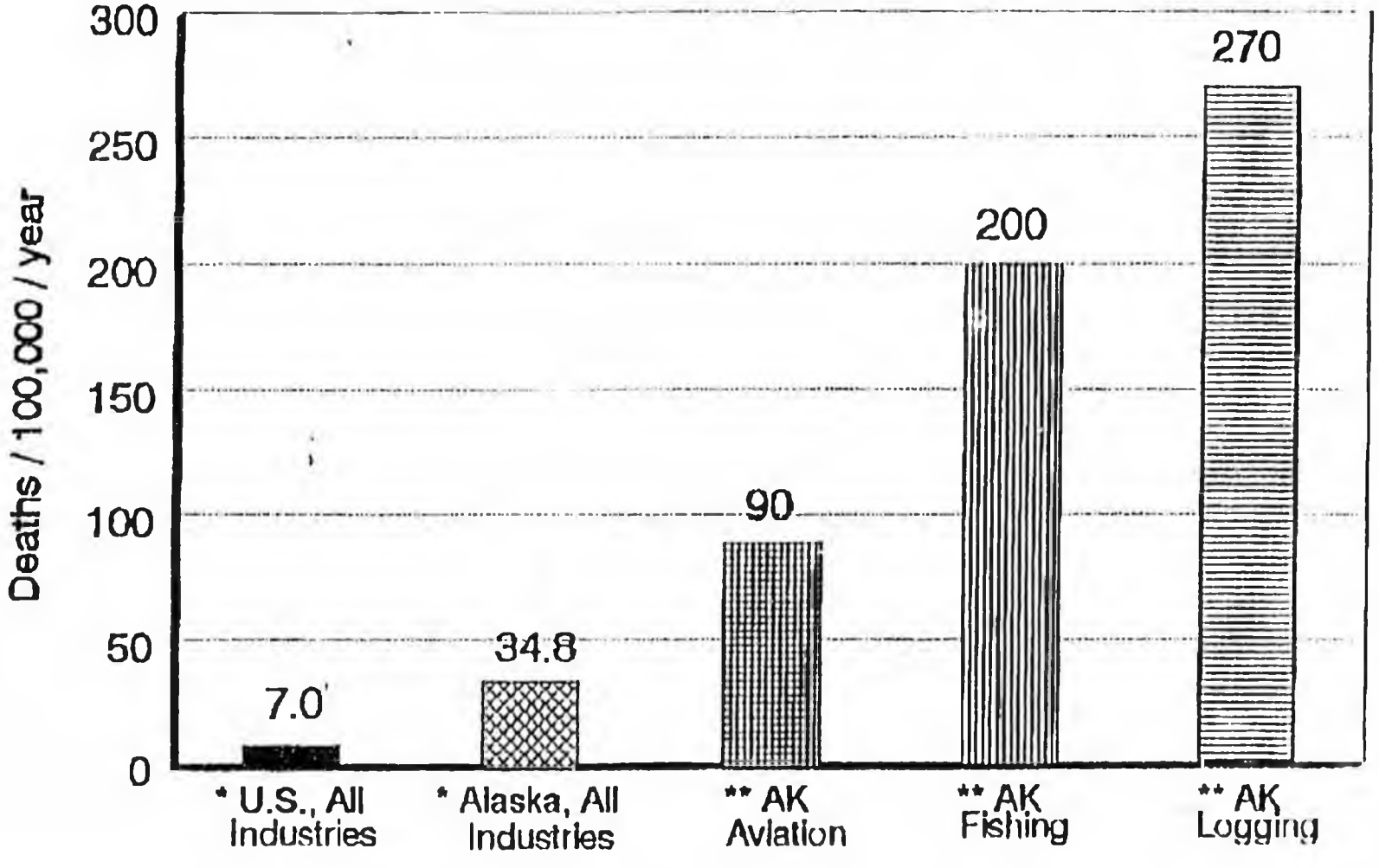
Occupational Fatality Rate Comparison

(rates for Alaska are for full time employment equivalents)



* SOURCE: US - NTOF, NIOSH, 1980-1989

** SOURCE: Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, NIOSH, 1991-1992

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