Crane Barge Safety Fatality File

Crane failure led to the death of fisherman aboard a fishing vessel last spring: TSB.

Transportation Safety Board of Canada released its investigation report Wednesday.

The federal investigation into the death of a fisherman last year in western Prince Edward Island found that crane failure led to the fatality.

Troy Jeffery died last April while working on an oyster barge off Poplar Grove, near Milligan’s Wharf, P.E.I.

- Troy Jeffery, 46, identified as man killed in Poplar Grove industrial accident.
- Poplar Grove industrial accident claims life of P.E.I. man
- Troy Jeffery’s death investigated by TSB.

Jeffery was the manager of Five Star Shellfish in Ellerslie, P.E.I., a business he had co-owned with his brothers Wyatt and Gordon since 2001.

At the time of his death, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) did not have details on the contributing factors, but the report from its investigation was released on Wednesday, more than a year after the fatal incident.

Flawed crane design

On that day last April, Jeffery was working over the side of a small barge, trying to untangle a securing line attached to a floating oyster cage beneath the elevated boom of a crane, the report said – although it does not refer to Jeffery by name.

The crane design was flawed, explained Terry Hiltz, a senior investigator with the TSB regional office in Dartmouth, N.S.

According to Hiltz, the flaw caused a part of the crane to break. The boom and the rigging hit Jeffrey, killing him instantly.

The investigation also found that the crew and the company did not detect the design flaw, nor were they conducting a thorough visual inspection before each voyage.

In Canada, there are no regulations or standards requiring equipment such as cranes on this type of fishing vessel to be thoroughly inspected, according to Hiltz.

“Without any kind of regulations or regulatory compliance or inspections or standards to be built to … flaws in equipment can go by without anyone noticing,” he added. “This particular vessel kind of fell through the cracks.”