**Plankton Tow Sampling Protocol**

**Prior to arriving at each station, the following should be done:**

* Prepare the net by ensuring the cod-end is securely fastened
* Have a Nalgene ready for transferring tow material collected
* Have a seawater hose ready to (gently) rinse the net into cod end
* Make sure someone is taking notes on the plankton tow data sheet

**Conducting the net tows:**

* Inform the MarTech of the following information:
  + Desired wire out length
    - If doing a vertical net tow, tell them the maximum depth of the tow
    - If this is an oblique tow, tell them the desired wire out length, use the Wire Out Estimator (depth/angle spreadsheet) and wire angle (ideally: 45˚) to estimate wire out.
  + Payout rate (30m/min)
  + Retrieval rate (20m/min), retrieve slower if you want to culture forams and reduce spine damate.
* For an oblique tow: ensure that the MarTech is aware that the ship should not go too much faster than 2 knots (for mesh sizes above 80 microns)
* Before placing the net in the water, record the start of the flow meter (if using one)

**Once the net is back on deck:**

* Record the flow meter on the data sheet
* Rinse the net off with the seawater hose, rinse the sides of the net into the cod-end
* Gently pour the contents of the cod-end into a nalgene, add seawater to rinse insides of cod-end again if needed, pour contents into the nalgene
* Rinse the net off with seawater. If finished, follow with a freshwater rinse, then hang to dry
* Take the sample into the wet lab to process