




Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Youth Services

Official Policy

Policy Name:	Supervision of Boating, Water and Ice Activities for DYS Youth		
Policy #:	03.02.28(c)	Effective Date:	July 8, 2020
Repeals:	03.02.28(b)		
References:	Pass Policy Search Policies		
Signature:	 Peter J. Forbes, Commissioner	<u>7</u> / <u>1</u> / 2020	
Applicability:	This policy shall apply to DYS state and contracted provider employees.		

Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) that the participation of youth in community or residential placement in boating, water and ice activities supervised by DYS state or contracted provider employees shall conform to strict safety rules in accordance with this policy and procedures.

This policy shall also apply to youth on passes pursuant to DYS Pass policy with DYS state or contracted provider employees for boating, water or ice activities.

In circumstances where a DYS state or contracted provider employee recommends or approves a youth to participate in a boating, water or ice activity class or lesson, the employee shall confirm such class or lesson is led by a certified instructor for that topic, if applicable.

Location Managers shall determine the appropriate levels of staff to oversee youth participating in these activities based on the numbers of residential or community youth participating and specifics of the activity, ensuring a minimum ratio of one (1) staff for every five (5) youth.

No DYS youth shall be permitted by DYS state or contracted providers to jump off fixed objects such as bridges, cliffs, quarries or jetties to swim. Additionally, activities that would allow a DYS youth in residential placement to operate or use motorized water equipment such as motorboat or jet skis are not permitted. DYS shall advise youth when

signing a grant of conditional liberty for community placement that motorized water equipment shall not be used without adult supervision.

Procedures

A. Definitions

1. The following definitions shall have the meanings assigned to them in this policy for purposes of interpreting this policy.

Certified Instructor: Individual who may or may not be employed by DYS or its contracted providers who has attended a course and received a certificate of completion for the course in which they are instructing or supervising. Such certification includes but is not limited to swimming, lifeguard, or boating safety certification. A certified instructor shall not be counted in ratio when supervising youths in the water activity.

Boating Activities: A water activity that involves using any type of small watercraft, including, but not limited to 'personal' boating such as canoeing, rafting, kayaking, sailing or wind surfing and 'commercial' boating such as ferry trips.

Ice Activities: Any activity that takes place on an open frozen body of water such as ice skating, ice hockey, and ice fishing.

Swimming Activities: A water activity where a youth enters the water above their knees, including swimming, surfing, or paddle boarding.

2. Terms that are defined Policy #01.01.04, "Policy Definitions" shall have the meanings assigned to them in that policy, unless a contrary meaning is intended.
3. Terms not defined in Policy #01.01.04 or in this policy shall have the meanings assigned to them by reasonably accepted standard dictionary definitions of American English.

B. Supervising Youth for Water or Ice Activities including Boating and Swimming

1. Staff supervising the activity shall review all rules with youth(s) prior to the activity.
2. Regional Director and Program Director or District Manager, as applicable, shall approve all locations for boating, swimming and ice activities prior to the activity.
3. Supervising staff shall check advisories for the location such as weather, water bacteria, water conditions and posted notices regarding the location prior to the activity.
4. Youth may choose not to participate in water or ice activities. Youth who decline to participate shall be provided alternative activities.

5. Searches after activities shall be in accordance with program location search and safety policy requirements.
6. Medication required for any youth should be kept in a waterproof container.
7. When supervising boating activities, staff shall:
 - a. Ensure all youth and DYS supervising employees wear a Coast Guard approved proper fitting Personal Floatation Device (PFD) at all times during individual, personal boating. This does not include commercial boating trips.
 - b. Inspect all personal boating and water equipment for damage and determine good working order prior to use.
 - c. For any activity that involves commercial boating such as whale watching or ferries, notify all participating youth they must follow all safety rules and wear safety gear as required.
8. When supervising swimming activities,
 - a. Location Managers/designees shall ensure swimming activities only occur in areas that are designated as swimming areas, with a certified lifeguard present at all times. No swimming activity shall occur at any location that does not have a lifeguard present. If DYS state or contracted provider is the certified lifeguard, they are not included in ratio.
 - b. The DYS Supervising employees shall conduct constant visual supervision and head counts of youth including swimmers and non-swimmers no more than every 5 minutes.
 - c. Youth shall be paired together for the “buddy system” when swimming.
9. When supervising fishing activities,
 - a. In accordance with the pass policy, fishing may be allowed for youth in residential and community placement per local fishing license requirements.
 - b. Fishing from the water’s edge or a boat does not require a lifeguard.
 - c. If swimming or boating is involved with the fishing, follow the procedures for boating and/or swimming above.
10. When supervising ice related activities in winter season, Location staff shall confirm with local authorities whether ice conditions are safe for such activities.

C. Documentation and Training

1. All state and contracted provider employees supervising water and ice activities shall complete new hire basic training and be in compliance with annual review training, including CPR and First Aid.
2. Location Managers shall keep a file on water and ice activities containing the following information:
 - a. staff certifications for these activities including lifeguard or swimming instructor certificates;
 - b. equipment safety inspection certificates, if applicable, for any equipment used by the DYS or contracted provider location.
3. All Locations that engage in boating, swimming or other water and ice activities shall maintain a record of the water or ice activity in the JJEMS Residential or Community Event Folder.