



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Buoy Line Modification Frequently Asked Questions

In addition to the weak line, do I still need a weak link at the base of the buoy?

Yes, the current requirement for weak links at the base of the buoy is still in place.

What does the length of the South Shore Sleeve have to be on the line? Does it have to be 6' or 3'?

The sleeves can be used in their full 6' length or cut down to 3'. They will break at 1,700 lbs either way. You can find information about how to install the sleeves on DMF's trap gear modification webpage (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/buoyline-trap-gear-modifications>). You can also participate in the demonstration at one of DMF's gear distribution events.

Where can I purchase the South Shore Sleeve?

Please contact your local rope supply store for information about the Novabraid "South Shore Sleeve".

If my buoy lines are 60' long or less, do I need to use weak rope or a weak contrivance?

Yes, all buoy lines must either be equipped with rope of a breaking strength of 1,700 lbs or less, or must be equipped with no less than one 1,700 lb contrivance every 60' of the top 75% of the buoy line. Meaning, if your buoy lines are 60' long or less, you need one contrivance in your buoy line, at a point of your choosing.

Do we still have to mark our buoy lines with a red mark and an area specific color?

Yes There is to be one solid red mark measuring at least 3' in the surface system (i.e., first 12' from buoy). In the body of the buoy line, there are to be at least four solid or non-solid red marks measuring at least 2' with at least two marks in the top 50% of the buoy line and two marks in the bottom 50% of the buoy line and no more than 60' between marks. If the buoy line is solid red or candy cane weak rope, then these marks are to be white in color. In state waters, there are to be no colored marks other than the described state mandatory red (or white) marks within the buoy line.

Can I use 5/16" rope instead of the weak rope?

The maximum buoy line diameter that you may fish is 3/8". Accordingly, you may fish with 5/16" rope instead of 3/8" rope. However, 5/16" rope does not serve as a substitute for the weak rope requirement, as standard 5/16" weak rope has a tensile strength greater than 1,700 pounds. Therefore, to meet the weak rope requirement you must either fish with the approved 3/8" red or candy cane weak rope or insert no less than one approved contrivance into your buoy line every 60' in the top 75%

How many gear marks will I need within a vertical buoy line in state waters?

All buoy lines in state waters regardless of length must have at least 5 marks within the line. The 1st being a 3-foot SOLID mark, within the first 2 fathoms or 12 feet from the buoy. Followed by two SOLID or NON-SOLID, 2-foot marks in the top 50% of the line and then two additional 2-foot marks in the bottom 50% of the line. Depending on the length of your buoy line, additional marks may be needed. No length of buoy line greater than 60 feet without a mark is allowed. Additional 2-foot SOLID or NON-SOLID marks must be present in those cases.

What is meant by a SOLID gear mark?

A solid gear mark is continuous and goes around the entire diameter of the buoy line without any breaks. Some examples include: Heat Shrink Tubing, Electrical Tape, Paint or Dye. Twine cannot be used for the mark.

What is meant by a NON-SOLID gear mark?

A non-solid mark is non continuous, it will follow a strand with the buoy line. An example of this is twine or zip ties, which can be tucked within the line. Materials used as solid marks can be used at non-solid marks.

What if I am using solid Red or Candy Cane Weak Rope for my buoy lines?

If you are using solid weak rope either Red or Candy Cane for your buoy lines, all of your markings will be white.

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