



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, the existing buoy line marking requirements are still in place for 2021. These requirements will change for 2022 through pending amendments to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, but the requirements have not yet been finalized by NOAA Fisheries. DMF will likely pursue rule-making to implement the state specific gear marking rules this spring. More details will be available shortly.

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%