



DCR Boat Wash Station and Inspection Guidance For Lake Associations and Municipalities

Volunteer or paid boat ramp monitors are the best line of defense to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Here are some basic boat ramp monitor guidelines:

- Always present yourself professionally, be friendly, and wear logo clothing if possible. You should be stationed as close to the boat launch as possible. If there is no structure in place, we recommend you bring a chair and shade tent (E-Z UP or similar) to stay out of the weather and to look professional. Make sure to approach each and every boater over the course of your shift. This includes canoers and kayakers.
- Introduce yourself as the boat ramp monitor and present a summary of your job and the topic of aquatic invasive species.
- Ask the boater if they are willing to participate in a survey and inspection. Our past data shows greater than 98% participation.
- Survey the boaters using an iPad or other tablet equipped with ArcGIS's Survey123 software. The exact survey DCR utilizes is available for use upon request..
- Visually inspect the boat, trailer, and vehicle to identify any evidence of aquatic invasive species (plants, mussels, mud, or anything else that would indicate contamination).
- Check that all drain plugs are pulled and there is no standing water in the boat. If you can't tell, ask the boater if their live well, bilge, ballast, and cooling systems are empty and dry. Take this opportunity to explain proper decontamination techniques and hand out the [Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers "white card"](#).
- If the boat appears to be contaminated with visual evidence or if the boater's answers indicate they've been in infested waters and have not decontaminated, explain to them that it is illegal for them to launch their vessel (MGL C. 21 S. 37 B & 302 CMR 18).
- If the boater refuses the program or launches in violation, you should call the local Harbormaster or Environmental Police at 1-800-632-8075. Do not physically stop a boater or ever put yourself in a confrontational situation.
- After completing your survey and inspection, thank the boater for their time and hand them educational materials (brochures, key float, etc.).

- When the boater is leaving the lake for the day, once again visually inspect the boat, trailer and gear to ensure they are not leaving with plants attached and that all drain plugs are pulled before leaving. Just as it is illegal to enter a lake contaminated, it is also illegal to leave a lake contaminated (MGL C. 21 S. 37 B & 302 CMR 18).

You may choose to install a boat wash station as a second line of defense. Use these guidelines in your design:

Permitting

A lakeside wash station would require filing a Request for Determination of Applicability or Notice of Intent with MassDEP and the Town Conservation Commission. If the station is over 100 feet away from the lake and over 200 feet away from a river or stream it may be exempt.

Power and Running Water is Available at the Site

- Option 1: Install some form of structure to house the equipment (shed, metal storage container, etc.). *Bonus- install solar on the roof* Install pressure tank if needed and tankless on-demand water heater (electric, natural gas, or propane- Rinnai or similar). ***Water temperature needs to be 140 degrees or above at the nozzle for mortality of microscopic organisms like zebra mussels based on research conducted by MassDEP***
- Option 2: Install pressure tank if needed and electric storage tank water heater (A.O. Smith, Rheem, etc.).*Bonus- install hybrid heat-pump electric storage tank water heater* Install garden hose and nozzle. Low pressure is best for live wells, bilge areas, and other tight spaces. Low pressure is also OK for larger exterior surfaces as the temperature itself will provide mortality to microscopic organisms and there is usually sufficient pressure to knock off loose items such as plant fragments. You may add a standard residential pressure washer to your system if you choose.

No Power Or Running Water Available at the Site

- Install some form of structure to house the equipment (shed, metal storage container, etc.).
- Install hot water power washer (Mi-T-M, Easy-Kleen, Hotsy, Hydro Tek, or similar).
- These machines are typically run on gasoline for the water pump with diesel for the water heater.
- Use a gas powered pump (Honda or similar) and connect garden hoses from the lake to the pump and then to the hot water washer to pull lake water for your source. This will provide the pressure needed to run the washer. *Bonus- use an electric (battery) transfer pump instead* We have had great results with the Milwaukee M18 Transfer Pump.
- You may use the high-pressure wand or simply disconnect the wand (make sure you install quick connects) and just use the handle itself to decontaminate the boat, trailer, and gear.

A note on freezing and soaking:

Some porous items such as wetsuits, ropes, or other items may be hard to decontaminate properly. Remember that freezing can also decontaminate these items. Some people may have space in a chest or other freezer available. After initially inspecting the gear and removing any visible plants, mud, or other visible evidence, these items can be exposed to the freezing temperatures for 24 hours to kill any microorganisms. If freezing is not available, items can be soaked in a container of the hot water.

A note on wash water runoff:

During the permitting process you may need to address the issue of wash water runoff. Simple boat rinse water without any soap, chlorine, or other additives should have no more impact on the lake than the physical contact of the same boat and trailer that is going into the lake. There are two primary ways this can be done if required:

- Designate a specific boat wash area that is sloped into a rain garden or an area that can be excavated and filled with a mixture of crushed stone, peat, and other absorbent organic material as required.
- Designate a specific boat wash area that is on a paved pad with a center drain and storage tank. This is a costly method with construction of the system and pumping/disposal of the wash water and should be avoided if at all possible.

In closing:

Every site is unique, and you may have to adjust your plans using a combination of the methods outlined above. We strongly encourage active boat ramp monitoring by paid or volunteer staff for inspections, removal of plants, draining all water, and operation of the boat wash station. Using both methods will ensure you have done as close to everything possible to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species coming into AND leaving your lake. For more information aquatic invasive species, please visit our website or the stop aquatic hitchhikers website listed at the bottom of this page.

"Experience is the greatest teacher of all."