



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
 Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
 Department of Public Health  
 Bureau of Environmental Health  
 250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619  
 Phone: 617-624-5757 Fax: 617-624-5777  
 TTY: 617-624-5286

CHARLES D. BAKER  
 Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
 Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS  
 Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH  
 Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000  
[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)

October 2020

**Guidance on Watercraft Safety  
 Alternative Training Certifications**

The Department of Public Health (DPH), Bureau of Environmental Health’s Community Sanitation Program has learned the American Red Cross course “Small Craft Safety” is no longer offered. While certifications in this course are valid until expired, DPH has been asked for guidance on acceptable alternative training for counselors supervising watercraft activities under 105 CMR 430.000 (*Minimum Standards for Recreational Camps for Children*).

To meet the minimum requirement<sup>1</sup>, staff who supervise or oversee watercraft activities must have current certifications and complete trainings that meet at least one of the following options:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lifeguard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ American Red Cross Small Craft Safety (valid until certificate expires)</li> <li>AND</li> <li>✓ American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue AND</li> <li>✓ American Canoe Association Paddle Sports (online) <a href="https://www.boat-ed.com/paddlesports/">https://www.boat-ed.com/paddlesports/</a> AND</li> <li>✓ In-person participatory training specific for the watercraft activities staff will oversee</li> </ul>

Camp operators must maintain written staff certifications and records of in-person training provided by the camp (including instructor certifications) to demonstrate appropriate training.

There are more comprehensive trainings available that could be accepted by the Local Board of Health, depending on the types of watercraft and aquatic activity that staff members will oversee.

For more information please visit [www.mass.gov/dph/dcs](http://www.mass.gov/dph/dcs) or contact the Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health at **617-624-5757**.

<sup>1</sup> 105 CMR 430.103 (B)(1) requires that “All watercraft activities shall be supervised by a minimum of one counselor for every 10 campers in watercraft. Each counselor shall hold a lifeguard certification or American Red Cross certification in Small Craft Safety and Basic Water Rescue, or an equivalent certification recognized by the Department that demonstrates water rescue procedures specific to the type of water and activities conducted.”