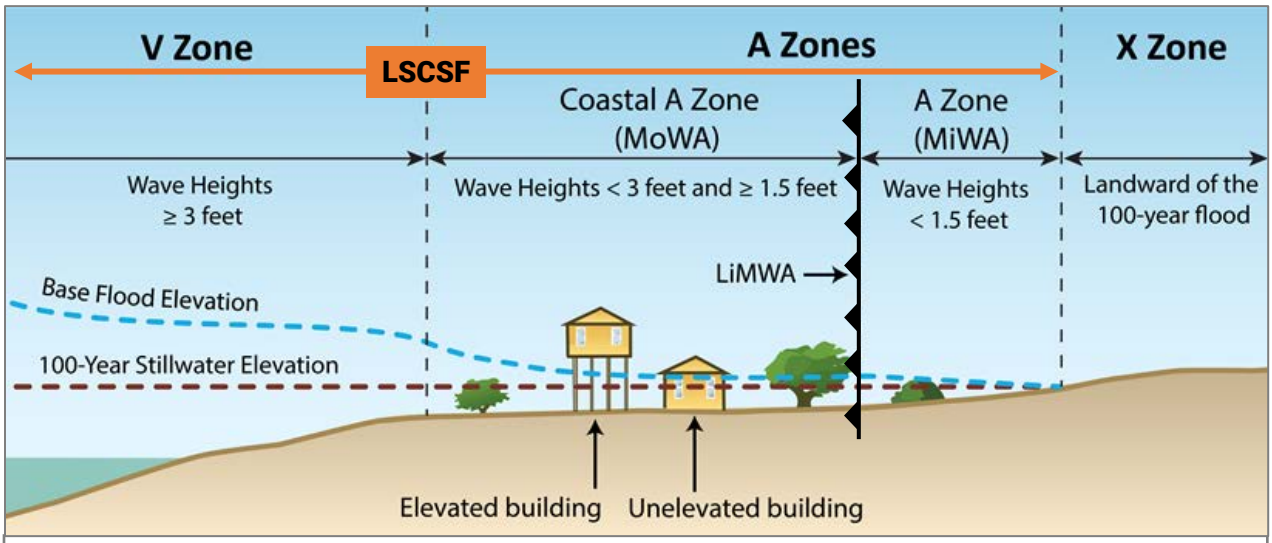
Understanding Coastal Flood Zones

Background: Proposed revisions to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) regulations (see 310 CMR 10.36) published on December 22, 2023 include performance standards for Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF), which promote resilience by preserving and restoring the natural floodplain functions of this area. In certain flood zones, proposed LSCSF standards require additional protections, such as elevating structures on open piles to preserve floodplain function and prevent damage (*see MassDEP companion fact sheet on LSCSF and Building Code Standards, accessible at* https://www.mass.gov/regulations/310-CMR-1000-wetlands-protection-act-regulations#proposed-amendments-public-comment).

Coastal Flood Zones (Example Diagram)



Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF) = FEMA Flood Zones V and A (*on this example diagram*)

Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) separates Moderate and Minimal Wave Action Areas (**MoWA** and **MiWA**) within FEMA's A Zones. The LiMWA is shown as a line with triangles (triangles point towards higher hazard area). The LiMWA is available for the entire coast of Massachusetts on the FEMA Map Service Center website: msc.fema.gov.

How to Identify Zones in the LSCSF from FEMA Maps

White lines = flood zone boundaries

LiMWA = boundary between MoWA and MiWA. Triangles point towards higher hazard area.

Zone AE and VE elevations (EL) are Base Flood Elevation.

Note: In some cases, there is no MoWA as the LiMWA divides Zone V and MiWA only.