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**Memorandum**

**From:** Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
**Date:** May 18, 2020  
**Subject:** Boating and various other marine and inland waterway related activities

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The following guidelines for boating and various other marine and inland waterway related activities supersede and replace guidelines issued by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on April 27, 2020. These guidelines remain in effect until rescinded.

This guidance should apply until amended or rescinded. Any questions regarding this guidance can be sent to [outdoor.recreation@mass.gov](mailto:outdoor.recreation@mass.gov)

**DPH Orders and Guidelines**

**Face Coverings and Masks:** All visitors to parks and open space, as well as those participating in outdoor education programs should comply with *COVID-19 Order 31: Order Requiring Face Coverings in Public Places Where Social Distancing is Not Possible*. The order requires any person over the age of 2, whether indoors or outdoors, to wear a face covering or mask when they cannot maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and others, unless they have a medical condition preventing them from doing so (see further guidance here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-state-of-emergency>).

**Group Size:** No groups larger than 10 are allowed to gather: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-31-2020-assemblage-guidance/download>

**Inland Boat Ramps and Canoe Launches:**

- ❖ Inland boat ramps and canoe launches within state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, boating access facilities and other state owned properties managed

by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts remain open for use by boats being launched by vehicles registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, except where the access has already been closed due to parking restrictions or other restrictions.

- ❖ All other inland boat ramps that are currently managed by municipalities remain open subject to the discretion of the city or town.

### **User Guidelines:**

- Ramps remain open subject to available parking. A ramp will be considered closed if all parking is full. Illegally parked cars will be ticketed and may be towed.
- All boat ramp and canoe launch users shall practice social distancing. Users should allow appropriate space for users of the boat ramp or launch and clear the ramp when users launch is complete.
- Users should ensure they are ready to depart quickly from the ramp or dock as soon as their boat is put into the water. Users not actively launching their boat should clear the launch area.
- Upon return to ramp, users should load their boat as quickly as safely possible and then clear the launch area.
- Use of ramps for organized fishing tournaments, derbies, or any other type of gathering is prohibited. Loitering on ramps or use of ramps for any activity other than launching boats is prohibited. Parking at ramps for activities other than launching boats is prohibited.
- Masks or face-coverings should be worn in public in accordance with the Department of Public Health's advisory when social distancing is not possible.

### **Coastal Boat Ramps:**

- ❖ For commercial, state and municipal uses, coastal boat ramps will remain open.
- ❖ For recreational use, coastal boat ramps managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts remain open for use by boats being launched by vehicles registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- ❖ All other coastal boat ramps currently managed by municipalities remain open for recreational use subject to the discretion of the city or town.

### **User Guidelines:**

- Coastal boat ramp parking lots are open for users launching boats, canoes and kayaks, and associated parking. Parking for the purpose of accessing coastal beaches is prohibited.
- All boat ramp and canoe launch users shall practice social distancing. Users should allow appropriate space for users of the boat ramp or launch and clear the ramp immediately when their launch is complete.
- Users should ensure they are ready to depart quickly from the ramp or dock as soon as their boat is put into the water. Users not actively launching their boat should clear the launch area.
- Upon return to ramp, users should load their boat as quickly as safely possible and then clear the launch area.
- Use of ramps for organized fishing tournaments, derbies, or any other type of gathering is prohibited.
- Loitering on ramps or use of ramps for any activity other than launching boats is prohibited. Parking at ramps for activities other than launching boats is prohibited.
- Masks or face-coverings should be worn in public in accordance with the Department of Public Health's advisory when social distancing is not possible.

### **Recreational boating:**

- The safe operation of recreational boats is permitted under the following guidelines:
  - Only persons from the same household should be together on a boat at one time.
  - No gathering or groups of persons from multiple households will be permitted on boat ramps, docks, piers etc., and all users shall practice strict social distancing.
  - All recreational crafts shall remain a safe distance apart. Tying boats or other crafts together is prohibited.
  - All recreational boating is subject to the discretion of local officials, harbor masters, and law enforcement.
  - All local rules, regulations, laws and Coast Guard requirements still apply.

### **Commercial Boating:**

- ❖ Maritime transportation workers, including dredgers, port workers, mariners, ship crewmembers, ship pilots and tugboat operators, equipment operators (to include

maintenance and repair, and maritime-specific medical providers), ship supply, chandler, and repair companies have all been deemed essential services under the Governor's orders.

- ❖ Commercial fishing is an essential part of the food supply chain and will continue to be allowed. Workers should follow public health guidance to minimize interactions with each other and the public.
- ❖ All local rules, regulations, laws and Coast Guard requirements still apply.