

**MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION  
BUREAU OF FORESTRY  
TIMBER HARVESTING LICENSE TESTING POLICY**

**The following policy updates are effective July 1, 2022 and will govern Massachusetts timber harvester licensing; administered by the DCR Service Forestry Program.**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Massachusetts Timber Harvesting License (MassTHL) Examination is to determine the applicant's familiarity with the laws of the Commonwealth that concern timber harvesting. As stated in Section 46 of Chapter 132, M.G.L., familiarity with these laws is a prerequisite to obtaining a MassTHL.

New applicants are required to pass an exam before receiving their first license for that fiscal year; applicants may also be required to re-test for the following reasons:

1. Insufficient continuing education
2. License has expired

All applicants requiring examination will be sent an exam notice that includes a schedule of exam dates and locations throughout the state.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

All MassTHL applicants will apply in the same manner, by submitting a completed application form along with the required fee to:

**MA Timber Harvesting License  
Dept. of Conservation and Recreation  
PO Box 1433  
Pittsfield, MA 01202**

Application forms can be obtained from the following DCR Bureau of Forestry Offices:

1. DCR Main Office, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA, 02114-2104
2. West Regional Office, PO Box 1433, Pittsfield, MA 01202 phone: (413-442-8928)
3. Field Office, PO Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004 phone: (413-545-5752)
4. Central Regional Office, 355 W. Boylston St, Clinton, MA 01510 phone: (978-368-0126)
5. DCR website: [mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-a-timber-harvest-license](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-a-timber-harvest-license)

## **EXAMINATION POLICY**

DCR will notify the applicant in writing if they are required to pass a test before being issued a license. Notices of test dates and locations will be provided to the applicant at least one week prior to the test. Tests will be held as needed, up to the maximum of 4 times a year. Reference materials are available upon request. A verbal examination can be arranged at the applicant's request.

The examination is a test consisting of 39 questions relating to Massachusetts forestry laws and regulations. One hour will be allowed for the completion of the test. A passing mark for the test will be 70% (or 27) of the questions answered correctly. Applicants who answer less than 27 of the 39 exam questions correctly will not be allowed to operate on permitted logging operations.

### **OPERATION IN A PENDING LICENSE STATUS**

Applicants may request permission from their local DCR service forester to operate in a license pending status on harvests permitted by CH. 132. A new applicant that has never held a MassTHL must work under the direct onsite supervision of a current license holder. Renewal and expired applicants that are required to re-test may operate independently up until the next available MassTHL exam. The ability to operate in a license pending status expires after the first round of available tests as posted in the annual exam schedule. Applicants failing to show for their scheduled examination will be placed on legal hold and not permitted to operate under Ch. 132 until they pass an examination.

### **NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

DCR will notify the applicant of the test results within two weeks of the test date. Those who pass the test will receive a Massachusetts license to harvest timber products in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 132 Section 46.

### **RETESTING**

Those who fail the test will be given the option of one retest without additional fee. Additionally, license renewal applicants that do not meet continuing education requirements will be required to retest before issuance of license.

### **ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWAL**

Licenses expire annually at end of each fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Renewal applications are due annually at the start of each fiscal year by July 1<sup>st</sup>; a 60-day grace period may be granted for late applications or for additional time to meet continuing education requirements. Renewal applications received after the 60-day grace period will be deemed expired and required to retest. Waiver of the continuing education requirement for a license year may be granted to any MassTHL holder whom for good cause shown and documented serves on active duty with any branch of the armed forces for a period greater than 90 consecutive days or for other service such as Peace Corps, extended jury duty or incapacitation due to illness or injury. Prior to licensure, applicants are required to demonstrate familiarity with the laws of the commonwealth that concern timber harvesting either through meeting continuing education requirements or passing MassTHL exam.

**See Timber Harvester License Continuing Education Policy.**

# TIMBER HARVESTING LICENSE CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY

## PURPOSE

DCR policy requires all license holders, including those employees identified on their employer's license applications (one for each employee), firms or corporations "...shall demonstrate general familiarity with the laws of the commonwealth that concern timber harvesting...." (M.G.L. Ch132 - section 46) by passing an examination or meeting continuing education requirements. Each applicant must accumulate nine (9) continuing education hours within a three (3) year recertification period. The purposes of continuing education are: 1) to build upon existing base of knowledge and 2) ultimately to ensure responsible and informed timber harvesting practices within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Attendance at training or retraining programs, seminars, workshops and lectures presented in various subject areas will fulfill the continuing education requirements.

## RECERTIFICATION PERIOD

Although Harvester Licenses are issued annually; Licensed Harvesters are given a three-year period to complete the continuing education requirements. Recertification periods begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the fiscal year in which the license is issued, continues for 36 months, and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the third year of continuous licensure.

## CONTACT HOURS

Each licensed harvester, (including employees listed on an employer's Timber harvesting licenses – one approved Timber Harvester's License for each employee with a separate THL number for each assigned person), is required to attend nine hours of continuing education within each three-year recertification period. Each sixty minutes of training equals one "contact hour" of continuing education. Three (3) of these nine (9) hours, must focus on the Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act (MGL Chapter 132, Sections 40-46) - Rules and Regulations 304 CMR 11.00: FOREST CUTTING PRACTICES, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Service Forestry Program. The remaining six (6) hours of continuing education can focus on a wide variety of subjects including but not limited to: wetland identification, wetland values and functions, rare species habitat protection, safety, business management, equipment maintenance, new equipment technologies, communication skills, natural resource management, forest product measurement, grading lumber or standing timber, wildlife management, forestry engineering, and others.

## VERIFICATION

Each licensed harvester must keep a record of continuing education sessions attended that contains standard continuing education certificates provided by the training sponsor or in the case of training that was not pre-approved a detailed program agenda with verification of attendance from speaker or sponsor will suffice. A list of sessions including the title, location, instructor, and dates attended, or a copy of the certificates and program agenda's, must be submitted at the end of each recertification period along with the Timber Harvester License application form and appropriate fee. Applicants, who fail to satisfactorily verify nine (9) hours of continuing education at the end of the recertification period or fail to renew a Harvester license, will be required to pass a test in order to obtain a current Timber Harvester License.

## SPONSORS

Continuing education opportunities can be designed and presented by various sponsors throughout the region, including but not limited to: the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Agricultural Resources, Department of Energy Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Fires Services, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Industrial Accidents, Department of Labor, Department of Public Health, Department of Public Safety, Department of Public Utilities, Department of Revenue, Department of State Police, Department of Transportation, Department of Workforce Development, Mass Audubon, University of Massachusetts, Forest Stewardship Program, Northeast Loggers Association, Massachusetts Forest Alliance, Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, local land trusts, town conservation commissions and others.

## PRE-APPROVAL

Pre-approval of continuing education sessions allows sponsors to accurately advertise continuing education opportunities to the forest industry. Each continuing education training program listed and submitted for recertification of a timber Harvester License is subject to review for approval.