



Invasive Aquatic Species Program COVID-19 Guidance: Courtesy Boat Inspections

To: Organizations conducting boat inspection programs
From: Maine Department of Environmental Protection Invasive Aquatic Species Program
Re: Courtesy Boat Inspection Program in 2020
Date: May 1, 2020

The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (Maine DECD) has determined that “work performed by boat inspectors to prevent the spread of invasive plants...is considered an essential business or operation...” Please see attached April 17, 2020 letter from DECD Commissioner Heather Johnson detailing the determination.

This memo provides guidance considering COVID-19 for Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) programs and inspectors. The following includes general guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and guidance specific to CBI programs from DEP.

All boat inspectors must follow this general guidance from the CDC:

- **Stay home when sick even if mild symptoms.** COVID-19 symptoms include fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing, chills, headache, loss of taste or smell (check <https://www.coronavirus.gov/> for updated list of symptoms). Additionally, stay at home if someone in your household has tested positive for corona virus.
- **Avoid close contact.** Observe social distancing by maintaining at least six feet between yourself and others.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.** You could spread COVID-19 even if you do not feel sick. This may protect other people in case you are infected. See also *Guidance for Inspectors* below regarding face coverings.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.** Cough into you elbow or a tissue.
- **Clean your hands often.** Wash hand with soap and water for 20 seconds. If using hand sanitizer (must contain 60% alcohol or more), rub hands until dry.
- **Avoid touching your face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth.**
- **Disinfect frequently touched items and surfaces.** Using an approved sanitizer, wipe down common surfaces such as chairs, clipboards, tables, etc. **Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.**

For complete CDC COVID-19 recommendations please use this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Specific Guidance for CBI Program

Guidance for CBI Organizations:

Strongly recommend that your inspectors use face mask, hand sanitizer and/or disposable gloves. Your organization may want to provide these items. DEP grant funds may be used to purchase these items.

Provide dedicated supplies to each inspector such as clip board, pen/pencil, tee-shirt, hat, and chair. Limit sharing of supplies by inspectors. If this isn't possible, ask inspectors to supply their own. Otherwise, devise a plan for sanitizing supplies before distributing to another inspector for use (see CDC guidance above).

Strongly recommend using the CBI app for electronic data collection to limit the number of people touching paper forms. The inspector can use their own smart device with no sharing involved. The data are available to the coordinator as soon as the inspectors uploads the data.

Guidance for Inspectors:

Always maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more from anyone at the access site, including boaters.

Wear a cloth face covering to protect others in case you have the virus but lack symptoms. Governor Mills' Executive Order 49 (April 29, 2020) requires cloth face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Clean your hands often using hand sanitizer containing 60% alcohol.

Remember, when coughing or sneezing, do so into your elbow or into a tissue; throw the tissue away.

Avoid touching any part of the boat, trailer or equipment. If you do touch the boat or trailer in the course of conducting an inspection, remember to sanitize your hands.

Do not assist boater with any part of launching or retrieving as this may require you to touch their boat.

Greet the boater from 6 feet away and communicate clearly about maintaining physical distance of at least 6 feet. If the boater is already outside of their vehicle, continue to maintain physical distancing. At the end of your inspection, ask the boater to inspect areas you could not access, e.g., anchor, lines, fishing gear. Lakes Environmental Association is developing a video to illustrate scenarios inspectors may encounter.

If a plant(s) fragment is found, ask the boater's permission to remove it. If the boater refuses to provide permission, ask the boater to remove it.

If the drain plug is still in the boat, ask the boater to remove it while you watch to be sure the bilge is drained completely. If they are launching, be sure they re-insert the plug.

Leave the boater with an offer of the brochure or winch sticker but do not hand it to them. Instead, have an area near the launch where they can pick up the items if they desire. This could be a folding table or box.

Use good judgment: if you don't feel you can conduct the inspection while maintaining social distancing protocol, don't do the inspection. Instead ask the boater to please inspect, remove anything found and drain bilges and live wells.

CBIs are essential but your – and each boater's – health is paramount.