

MBSS Fish Sampling, Fish Crew Leader, and Fish Taxonomy Certifications Frequently Asked Questions

I want to collect stream fish data and have been asked to comply with the MBSS certification process. What is required?

The requirements are:

1. Assemble a field crew and all necessary sampling equipment and supplies.
2. At least one person on the crew is a MBSS certified fish crew leader.
3. At least one person on the crew is MBSS certified in fish taxonomy.

One person can fulfill multiple duties, e.g. the person certified in fish taxonomy can also be the person certified as fish crew leader.

Must everyone working on a fish sampling crew be certified in fish sampling?

No. DNR realizes that fish sampling crews often consist of student interns, seasonal employees, and volunteers. However, a support member of a fish sampling crew should follow the direction of a MBSS certified fish crew leader during fish data collection. An individual who is not MBSS certified in fish taxonomy should not identify fish.

What is the Fish Sampling certification?

DNR encourages, but does not require, individuals working with a fish crew leader to be fish sampling certified. Fish sampling certification is good for three years.

Requirements are:

1. You must register for MBSS Summer Sampling Training for each of the 3 years the certification is valid.
2. You must be present during the fish sampling Power Point presentations given on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of each of the 3 years the certification is valid.
3. You must be present at the fish sampling demonstration given on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of each of the 3 years the certification is valid.
4. You must pass a written test on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of the first year of certification only.

What is the Fish Crew Leader certification?

This certifies a person to lead a stream sampling field crew to conduct MBSS fish sampling. This certification is good for three years.

Requirements are:

1. You must register for MBSS Summer Sampling Training for each of the three years the certification is valid.

2. You must be present during the Power Point presentations given on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of each of the three years the certification is valid.
3. You must be present at the fish sampling demonstration given on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of each of the three years the certification is valid.
4. You must pass a written Fish Crew Leader test on the Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader Certification Day of the first year of certification only.
5. You must undergo a field audit during the first year of certification as described below:
Applicant must assemble a field crew. The applicant must schedule this audit prior to beginning field sampling for the year. The applicant and field crew will be observed by an MBSS Quality Control Officer while sampling a complete site.

What is the Fish Taxonomy certification?

This certifies a person to conduct species-level identification of stream fishes in Maryland. This certification is valid for one year.

Requirements are:

1. You must score $\geq 90\%$ on the Fish Taxonomy test administered at the MBSS Summer Training session.
2. You must provide a photo voucher or specimens (5 per species) of all fish species identified in the field sampling year to the MBSS QA/QC officer.
3. You must undergo one field audit. The applicant must schedule this audit prior to beginning field sampling for the year.

How much will each certification cost?

There is no cost for the MBSS Fish Sampling certification as long as you register and pay the MBSS summer training registration fee for each of the three years certification is valid.

The Fish Crew Leader certification will cost \$400 for individuals from for-profit companies and \$100 for government agency, NGO, and academic personnel. This amount will only be due after the written exam is passed, and covers certification for all three years, as long as you also register and pay the MBSS summer training registration fee for each of the three years certification is valid.

Fish Taxonomy certification will cost \$100 for individuals from for-profit companies and \$25 for government agency, NGO personnel, and academic personnel.

Can our firm/organization/agency become certified?

No. Only individuals can be certified in MBSS fish sampling protocols and taxonomy.

Must I pursue all certifications?

No. The MBSS certification is *a la carte*. You can choose one or all.

How can I pay for training registration?

We can only accept checks made payable to “Maryland DNR”. Payment for training must be made in advance of MBSS summer training (i.e., no later than May 12). No checks will be accepted at the door and we cannot admit walk-in registrants.

How can I pay for certification?

DNR will accept checks for certification fees from individuals who register for fish crew leader or fish taxonomy certification at the time of the field audit.

Do I still need to pay the registration fee if I only attend one day of the training?

Yes, to attend one or all days of training will cost \$200.

Can I attend MBSS summer training without certification? If so, what are the costs?

Yes. MBSS summer training will continue as in previous years. Summer Training (without certification) in 2014 will cost \$200.

Will MBSS trainings continue to be open to non-professionals?

Yes. However, MBSS training registrations will continue to be accepted on a first come-first served basis.

If I submit payment for registration or certification but then cannot attend the training, can I get a refund?

Sorry. No refunds will be given. Refunds are not possible for the training registration fee. To eliminate the need for certification refunds, DNR will only accept payment at the time of the field audit.

How long does certification last?

Fish Sampling and Fish Crew Leader certifications are valid through December 31 of the third year of certification. Fish Taxonomy certification is valid for one year from the date of the fish taxonomy test.

What will I receive if I pass all requirements for certification?

After completing the MBSS Fish Sampling, Fish Crew Leader, and/or the Fish Taxonomy certifications, your name and affiliation will be posted on DNR’s MBSS website (<http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/streams/MBSSRegistry.asp>). MBSS certification may qualify you to work on certain stream-related projects in Maryland. Some state and county agencies are considering making MBSS certification a requirement for working on certain projects.