

MBSS 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.
2. Have at least one person on the crew be certified as a MBSS fish crew leader.
3. Have at least one person on the crew be a MBSS certified fish taxonomist.

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

What is the Fish Crew Leader certification?

Fish Crew Leader certification qualifies a person to lead a stream sampling field crew to conduct MBSS fish sampling. This certification is good for three years.

For each of the three years the certification is valid, you must:

1. Attend the MBSS Summer Training.
2. Be present during the Power Point presentations given on the Fish Crew Leader Certification Day.
3. Be present at the fish sampling demonstration given on the Fish Crew Leader Certification Day.

On the first year of certification, you must:

1. Pass a written Fish Crew Leader test given on the Fish Crew Leader Certification Day.
2. 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 undergo one field audit. The applicant must schedule this audit prior to beginning field sampling for the year.

How much will each certification cost?

In addition to the MBSS summer training registration fee, Fish Crew Leader certification will cost \$500 for individuals from for-profit companies and \$250 for government agency, NGO personnel, and academic personnel. Fish Taxonomy certification will cost \$180 for individuals from for-profit companies and \$100 for government agency, NGO personnel, and academic personnel. Individuals seeking both Fish Crew Leader and Fish Taxonomy certifications can be audited for both certifications on the same day for a cost savings over individual certification prices - \$560 (for-profit) or \$285 (government, NGO, academic).

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 certification?

We can only accept checks made payable to “Maryland DNR”. Payments to attend MBSS summer training must be made in advance of MBSS summer training (i.e., no later than May 1). No checks will be accepted at the door and we cannot admit walk-in registrants. Payments for fish crew leader and fish taxonomy certifications will be accepted on the day of the field audit.

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

Yes. MBSS summer training will continue as in previous years. The only required fee will be the MBSS summer training fee.

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. 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 Crew Leader certification is valid for THREE years.

Fish Taxonomy certification is valid for ONE year.

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

Following completion of the MBSS Fish Crew Leader, and/or the Fish Taxonomy certifications, your name and affiliation will be posted with your permission on the MBSS Certification Registry on the DNR website <http://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/Pages/mbssregistry.aspx>. 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.