

MENEMSHA HARBOR MEMO

TO: Chilmark Board of Selectmen

FROM: Dennis Jason, Harbormaster

DATE: July 14, 2017

REGARDING: Crab Corner

Last year we researched the regulations and legality of allowing swimming and swimmers to be in the close proximity of any boats within the operation of a Marina. We noted that the regulations prohibit any bathing activity with 150 feet of boats. All our information was found in THE MASSACHUSETTS BOATER SAFETY HANDBOOK, which is the Official Boating Hand Book of the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources (about 60 pages) which is on line.

Over the past year The Board of Selectmen and myself have reviewed possible safety measures which need to be implemented in the Harbor. This Spring we installed a demarcation safety line to mark the area for safe swimming – off the Menemsha bathing beach. This marks the area to keep boaters on the northerly side of the line and swimmers on the southerly side of the line. The responsibility for enforcing this is with the Life Guards who are patrolling the bathing beach.

In June, during a field trip of the West Tisbury School, kids visiting the area called Crab Corner – which is directly behind -- to the northerly side of the transient docks -- experienced a slight tingle when entering the water. Over the past couple of weeks and using a professional electrical engineer (Rick Penney), the town's electrical inspector (Cole Powers) and several electrical contractors, we have tentatively identified the source of the problem. It appears to be the improperly grounded electrical line leading out to the transient docks. We have made repairs that the wiring inspector has inspected and approved.

We have closed that area to swimmers since the electrical issues were first discovered. In fact, due to the proximity of boats and the marina, that area is in the 150 foot radius from boating activity and in proximity to the dock with the electrical issues.

I recommend to the Board of Selectmen that based on those factors that Crab Corner remain closed to swimmers indefinitely.

Dennis Jason, Harbormaster