

Exempt Sites

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The Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources (BUAR) is the sole trustee of the Commonwealth's underwater cultural heritage and is charged with encouraging the discovery, reporting, interpretation, and protection of these resources. While underwater archaeological resources are commonly shipwrecks (there are more than 3,500 shipwrecks within Massachusetts waters), they also include submerged Native American sites, wharves, and aircraft.

The BUAR can determine that an underwater archaeological resource, because of its location, condition, history, or resource value, may be best left in the public domain. It may declare the site exempt from the permit process. This dataset includes the 40 underwater archaeological sites in Massachusetts that are designated as "exempted sites." Recreational diving activities, including casual artifact collection, on exempted shipwreck sites do not require a permit from BUAR. However, any major disruption of the site is prohibited. Go here to get a permit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/buar-permits-and-exemption-requirements>

Go here to see the list of Exempt Sites: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/buar-exempted-shipwreck-sites>