Before You Begin—

Iowa Boat Dock Permit Application Checklist - Riparian Docks

Please review some of the basic dock permit requirements below before you begin. If you have questions about your dock placement, and/or configuration and whether or not it meets the current regulations, please contact your county conservation officer prior to submitting your permit application.

Property Line Offsets: Keep all structures at least 5 feet inside your property line projection, maintaining a 10-foot gap between adjacent docks or hoists.

Placement Angle: Install the dock perpendicular to the shoreline near the center of your property edge.

Dimensions & Width: Main docks must be between 4 and 6 feet wide. Natural lake "L" or "T" segments cannot exceed 20 feet in total length or 200 square feet in area.

Water Depth Access: Dock length is limited to what is necessary for reasonable access, defined as reaching a minimum water depth of 3 feet.

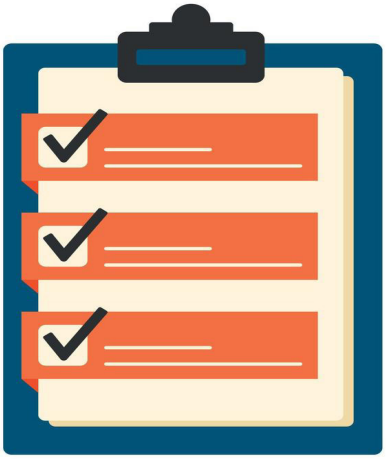
Diagram/Sketches: Prepare accurate measurements (width, total length, "L/T" dimensions, and depth point) if applying for a Class 3 or Class 4 permit. You will be asked to upload a diagram/sketch of your dock configuration.

Required Information:

Once you are ready to apply for your dock permit, gather the following information before you log in to the online application portal:

1. Dock Address Information

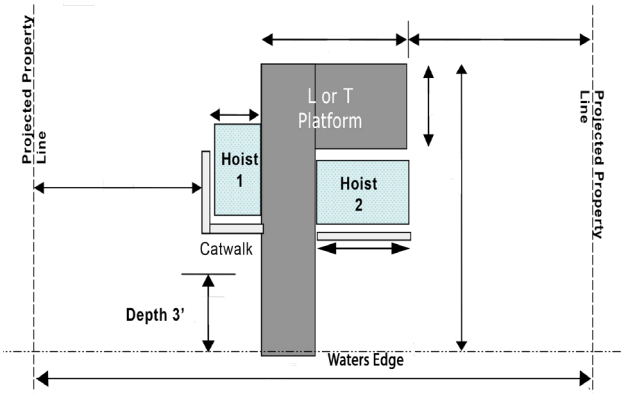
- 911 Address for the dock location
- Name of the water body (lake, river, etc.)
- County where the dock is located
- Parcel number (requested, but not required



2. Property Owner's Information

- Skip this section if you own the property where the dock is located.
- Name of property owner
- Address of property owner, including City, State, and Zip code
- Phone number

3. Gather Dock Measurements



- Total length of dock (in feet and inches)
- Distance from shore to 3 feet of water (in feet)
- Width of main dock (in feet and inches)
- Width of shoreline property (in feet)
- If any section is wider than 6 feet, provide platform dimensions (in feet and inches)
- Total number of mooring buoys
- List any additional structures (e.g., swim raft, swim platform, trampoline, or other structures)

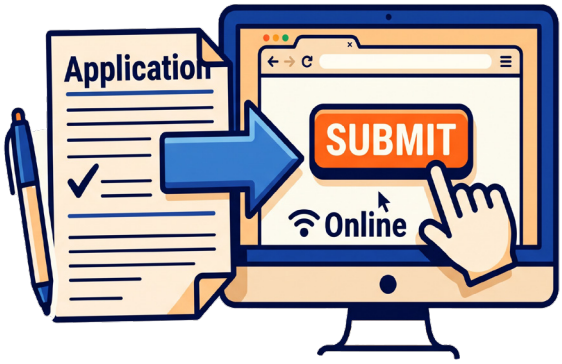
4. Define Dock Placement Along Shoreline

- Distance from the left edge of dock/hoist/catwalk/moored vessel to the projection of the left property line (in feet and inches)
- Distance from the right edge of dock/hoist/catwalk/moored vessel to the projection of the right property line (in feet and inches)

5. Prepare Dock Diagram (for Class 3 and 4 Applicants Only)

- Prepare a diagram with accurate dimensions of your dock and related structures. This diagram must be uploaded as part of the application process if you are a Class 3 or 4 applicant. It can be hand-drawn, or designed electronically.

Submit Your Application:



The above checklist ensures you have all the required information ready, making the online application process for a boat dock permit in Iowa smooth and efficient.

Once you have gathered all the above information, go to www.iowadnr.gov/boatdocks to create your online account and apply for a new dock permit. If a fee is owed at time of application, you will be notified while logged into your account. You will also receive email notifications throughout the application and review process.

Email dockmaster@dnr.iowa.gov with any questions.