Before You Begin—

Iowa Dock Management Area Dock/Hoist Application Checklist

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 or park ranger prior to submitting your permit application.

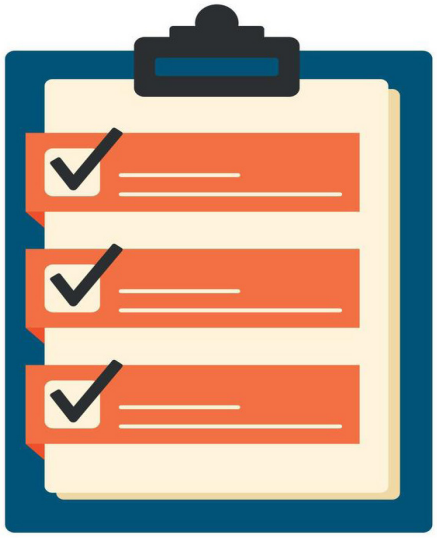
Placement Angle: Install the dock perpendicular to the shoreline.

Configuration Regulations: 571—16.17(4)

a. "L" or "T" segments. A dock shall have no more than one "L" or "T" segment. The total length of the "L" or "T" segment facing opposite from shore shall not be greater than 20 feet including the width of the dock. The total area of the "L" or "T" segment shall not exceed 200 square feet. That part of the main dock forming the center of a "T" segment or an extension of an "L" segment shall be included in measuring the area of the "T" or "L" segment. A smaller platform size limit may be required at locations specified by the department as having limited available space.

b. Catwalks. Catwalks shall be at least two feet wide and considered as part of the dock. The length limit for an "L" or "T" segment stated in paragraph "a" shall be applicable to each catwalk. A catwalk shall not extend beyond the width of the hoist.

c. Hoists. A hoist or other boat storage structure shall not be placed adjacent to any "L" or "T" segment of a dock or adjacent to any other part of a dock that is more than six feet wide. The hoist shall not exceed ten feet in width at locations specified by the department as having limited available space



Dimensions (Length & Width): A dock may extend the greater of 100 feet from the water's edge or far enough so that the outer 80 feet of the dock is in 3 feet of water up to a maximum of 300 feet, but the dock shall be no longer than the length for which the applicant provides justification, and the length shall be stated in the permit.

Docks shall be at least four feet wide and no more than six feet wide.

Exceptions: Shared dock serves 2-6 residences. Individual single-family private docks are prohibited. Except at Lake Macbride, the Clear Lake Harbourage, and Lake Odessa, a maximum of two residences, each in accordance with 571—16.16(461A), shall share a single dock site.

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

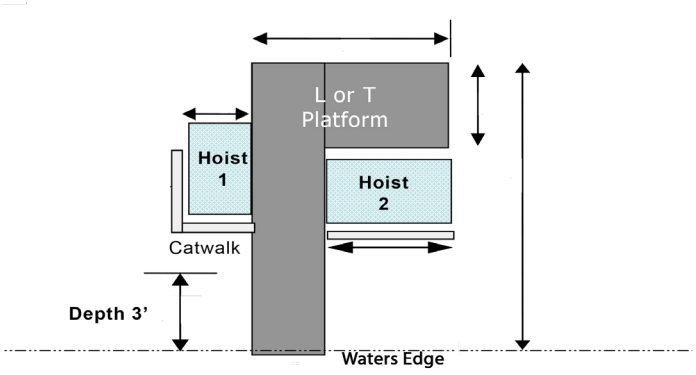
Shared Expense Estimates: Primary dock permit holders should gather estimated annual costs (installation, removal, maintenance, and required $1,000,000 liability insurance) to coordinate private cost-sharing with participating hoist/slip permittees.

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
- Dock Management Area where the dock is located



2. Permittee's Information

- Name of the Dock Master and/or Hoist/Slip Permittees.
- Physical address of Permitte/applicant, including City, State, and Zip code
- Phone number
- Primary email address and secondary email address (if desired)

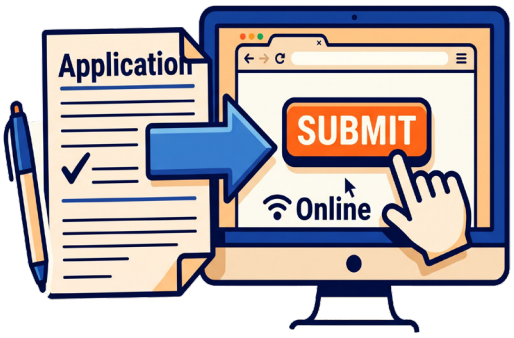
3. Gather Dock Measurements

- 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)
- "L" or "T" dimensions, catwalks and hoists (in feet and inches), if applicable

4. Prepare Dock Diagram

- Prepare a diagram with accurate dimensions of your dock and related structures. This diagram must be uploaded as part of the application process. 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.