Iowa Public Water Dock & Vessel Storage Guide

Private Shoreline Docks & Hoists
Docks, lifts, and hoists installed directly off private lakefront or riverfront property owned or controlled by the applicant on public waters. *(Class 1-4 below)*

Dock Management Areas (DMA)
Designated public shoreline areas where individuals or neighborhood associations apply for permits to place shared docks, hoists or slips on public waters.

State Park Vessel Storage
In-water slip space permitted on a designated Iowa State Park owned and managed dock.

Class 1

No Fee ($0)
Non-Expiring Permit Term

Standard Private Dock

Who/What It Serves:
- 1 Single Residence: Up to 2 boat hoists/lifts max.
- Common Dock: Serves up to 3 adjoining shoreline residences (up to 3 hoists per home.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Must meet 1 hoist per 10 ft. of shoreline frontage rule.
  - Main walkway width ≤ 6 feet.
  - Platform area (“L” or “T” ≤ 200 sq. ft. (water-facing ≤ 20 ft.).
  - No swim platforms, swim rafts, or mooring buoys allowed.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—16.4 — Self-Certification Process

Class 2

No Fee ($0)
Valid up to 5 Years

City or County Authorized Public Dock

Who/What It Serves:
- Public access docks owned or authorized by cities, counties, or political subdivisions along public shorelines.
- Allows multiple dock structures along public park fronts.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Allows public swimming platforms, rafts, and mooring buoys.
  - Eligible for dimensional exception waivers where necessary.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—16.5 — 5 Year Permit Renewal

Class 3

$125 Every 5 Years
+$50/year per hoist over 4

Non-Standard Private Dock/HOA

Who/What It Serves:
- Private docks exceeding Class 1 limits.
- Serves condo units, apartment complexes, or HOAs.
- Serves properties without a seasonal/permanent residence.
- Serves land not owned/leased by dock owner.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Platform area ≤ 240 sq. ft.
  - Allows swim rafts, platforms, trampolines, and buoys.
  - Can request exception waivers (platform area, walkway, >6ft. length, setbacks, hoist density.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—16.6 — Requires 5 Year Application Renewal and Fee.

Class 4

$250 Every 5 Years
+$50/year per slip over 6

Commercial Dock & Marina

Who/What It Serves:
- Commercial marinas, resorts, restaurants, or yacht clubs.
- Private docks charging slip fees or leasing boat spaces.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Custom commercial sizing and water depth profiles (bathymetric plans).
  - Allows commercial fuel staging, swim platforms, and guest slips.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—16.7 — Requires 5 Year Application Renewal and Fee.

DMA

Annual Payment
***Per DMA Site & Slip Fee Schedule**

Dock Management Area (DMA)

Who/What It Serves:
- Mandatory shared dock serving 2-6 residences. Individual single-family private docks are prohibited.
- Dock permittee must submit annual proof of active $1,000,000 general liability insurance. Slip/Hoist permittee not required.
- Permits are non-transferable. Unused docks/hoists/slips revert to DNR waiting lists.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Minimum 50 feet separation distance required between adjacent DMA dock sites.
  - Main walkway width 4-6 ft. Terminal platform maximum area 200 sq. ft.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—16.15-18 — Requires 5 Year Application Renewal

Vessel Storage

Annual Payment
***Per State Parks, Forest & Preserves Fee Schedule**

State Park Vessel Storage (Wet Storage)

Who/What It Serves:
- Individual watercraft owners seeking seasonal in-water storage at designated state park owned / managed docks.
- Watercraft registered directly to the permit holder.
- Authorized components & structural limits:
  - Storage is restricted to the designated slip space as assigned.
  - No permanent structural alterations or modification are permitted.
  - Only one primary registered watercraft may occupy an assigned slip.

Iowa Admin. Rule 571—61.8 — Annual Renewal via Fee Payment