

CHAPTER 16  
DOCKS AND OTHER STRUCTURES ON PUBLIC WATERS  
[Prior to 12/31/86, Conservation Commission[290] Ch 33]

**571—16.1(461A,462A) Definitions.**

*“Artificial lake”* means all river impoundments and all other impoundments of water to which the public has a right of access from land or from a navigable stream inlet. Examples are Lake Panorama, Lake Delhi, Lake Nashua, and Lake Macbride.

*“Boat”* means “watercraft” as defined in Iowa Code section 462A.2.

*“Boat hoist”* or *“lift”* means a structure placed in the water or below the ordinary high-water mark for boat storage, including platforms for storage of personal watercraft. For the purposes of this chapter, a boat hoist that is designed to store up to two small vessels such as personal watercraft or one-person sailboats may be treated as a single hoist. For the purposes of this chapter, storage of stand-up paddleboards on racks above the platform of a dock is not counted as a boat hoist or lift; however, a rack for storage of canoes or kayaks is a boat hoist.

*“Catwalk”* means a platform no more than four feet wide installed to provide access from a dock to a moored boat or boat hoist.

*“Commercial dock”* means a dock used as part of a business, including a dock extending from residential property if one or more mooring spaces at the dock are rented for a fee. A dock maintenance fee charged by a property owners’ association to its members is not a basis to classify a dock as commercial. This definition is not applicable to docks in dock management areas or concession operations administered by the department.

*“Commission”* means the natural resource commission.

*“Common dock”* means a dock serving two or more adjoining shoreline properties.

*“Department”* means the department of natural resources.

*“Director”* means the director of the department of natural resources or the director’s designee.

*“Dock”* means a platform-type structure extending from shoreline property over a public water body, including but not limited to platforms that provide access to boats moored on the water body.

*“Dock management area”* or *“DMA”* means an area designated by the department in the bed of a water body adjoining a state park, wildlife management area, or recreation area or adjoining a strip of land that was dedicated to the public and is subject to the jurisdiction of the department pursuant to Iowa Code section 461A.11(2). A dock management area as designated by the department includes an area adjoining public land from which docks extend.

*“Impoundment”* means a body of water formed by constructing a dam across a waterway.

*“Public dock”* means a dock constructed and maintained to provide public access from public land to a water body.

*“Public land”* means land that is owned by the state, a city, or a county or land that has been dedicated for public access to a public water body.

*“Public water body”* is a water body to which the public has a right of access.

*“Rental”* means taking compensation, trading, or bartering for the usage of a slip or hoist on a Class I or Class III dock, including the rental of a vehicle parking spot that includes the privilege of using a hoist or slip on a Class I or Class III dock.

*“Shoreline property”* means a parcel of property adjoining (littoral to) a lake or adjoining (riparian to) a river or other navigable stream.

*“Slip”* means a mooring space, usually adjacent to a dock, sometimes accessed by a catwalk.

*“Water body”* means a river or other stream, a natural lake, an artificial lake or other impoundment, or an excavated pit.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

DIVISION I  
PRIVATE, COMMERCIAL AND PUBLIC DOCKS

**571—16.2(461A,462A) Scope of division and classes of permits.** Permits are required for docks on all water bodies open to the public for boating or other recreational uses. This division governs permits for all types of docks except docks in dock management areas designated by the department. Classes of permits are designated as follows: Class I permits authorize standard private docks, other private docks in specified areas, and docks permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Class II permits authorize docks that are managed by governmental entities and extend from shoreline property owned by those governmental entities; Class III permits authorize nonstandard private docks; and Class IV permits authorize commercial docks. A dock that involves placement of fill or construction of a permanent structure in a state-owned public water body also requires a construction permit issued under 571—Chapter 13. A dock issued a permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, located on a water body managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, does not require a state dock permit under this chapter.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.3(461A,462A) Standard requirements for all docks.** All docks are subject to the following requirements:

**16.3(1) Adverse impacts on aquatic ecosystem.** All docks, hoists, slips and related structures shall be located, sized, configured, constructed and installed to limit their adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem. In areas of sensitive aquatic habitat, docks and hoists shall be located, configured, constructed and installed to minimize harm to aquatic habitat. Other restrictions may be placed on docks that are in a state-protected waters area as necessary to protect the natural features of the designated area.

**16.3(2) Adverse impacts on public access for recreational use.** A dock shall not be configured to enclose an area of a public water body and create a private water area or otherwise adversely affect public recreational use of the water body. Where walking or wading parallel to the shore below the ordinary high-water mark would be physically practical except for the obstruction created by a dock, the dock owner shall not prevent a person from stepping on or over the dock to bypass the obstruction.

**16.3(3) Location and offsets.** To the extent practical, a dock and boat hoists shall be placed near the center of the shoreline property frontage and installed perpendicular to the ordinary high-water mark to maximize offsets from neighboring properties. Each dock, hoist, moored vessel and other permitted structure shall be offset a minimum of five feet from an adjoining property line and five feet from the projection of a line perpendicular from the ordinary high-water mark at the common boundary with adjoining shoreline property as determined by the department. A minimum gap of ten feet shall be maintained between adjoining docks (including “L” or “T” or catwalk segments), hoists or moored boats. Where projection of a line perpendicular from the ordinary high-water mark is impractical, it is the intent of this rule that a ten-foot gap be maintained in a manner that is equitable to each adjoining shoreline property owner.

**16.3(4) Length.** A dock shall not extend farther from the water’s edge than the distance necessary for reasonable access to the water body in relation to characteristics of the water body in the vicinity of the dock site and the impacts on the water body and other users. Access to maintain one or more boats in water with a minimum depth of three feet shall be considered sufficient access.

**16.3(5) Display of 911 address.** Each dock owner shall display the 911 address, including the street and city, assigned to the property served by the dock. The owner of a dock authorized by an individual permit shall also display the dock permit number. The information shall be displayed in block letters and numbers at least one inch high in a color contrasting with the background, on the water end of the dock, facing away from shore, and shall be plainly visible.

**16.3(6) Winter removal.** Each dock must be removed from public waters before December 15 of each year and shall not be reinstalled until the following spring unless the removal requirement is waived by a condition of a dock permit or by rule 571—16.18(461A,462A).

**16.3(7) *No enclosure of private docks.*** Private docks and docks in dock management areas shall not be enclosed by roofs or sides. Hoists may be enclosed by roofs and sides constructed of soft-sided natural fiber or synthetic fiber materials for the purpose of protecting watercraft.

**16.3(8) *Materials and flotation specifications.*** Every new floating structure authorized by this chapter shall use flotation methods and devices of a type constructed of low-density, closed-cell rigid plastic foam; high-impact polyethylene fiberglass material; wood products pressure-treated with a product approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for aquatic use; or other inert materials to provide flotation. Synthetic (such as plastic or fiberglass) or metal containers not originally manufactured as flotation devices may be used as dock flotation devices if they have been cleaned of any product residue, sealed and watertight, and filled with a closed-cell rigid plastic foam.

**16.3(9) *Flow of water.*** All docks shall be constructed and placed in a manner that allows the free flow of water beneath them.

**16.3(10) *Excavation, fill and aquatic vegetation removal prohibited.*** No bed material may be excavated or fill placed, and no aquatic vegetation may be removed below the ordinary high-water mark of a water body in association with construction of a dock unless excavation, placement of fill, or aquatic vegetation removal is specifically authorized by a construction permit issued under 571—Chapter 13.

**16.3(11) *Storage, use, and dispensing of fuel.*** The storage, use, and dispensing of any fuel on a dock on or over a public water body or adjacent public land shall be in compliance with Iowa Code chapter 101 and administrative rules that implement Iowa Code chapter 101.

**16.3(12) *Electrical service.*** Any electrical service on or leading to any dock used for storage or dispensing of fuel must comply with the National Electrical Code, 2023 edition. All electrical service leading to docks shall include ground fault circuit interrupter protection.

**16.3(13) *Anchoring of river docks.*** All river docks must be securely anchored to prevent them from becoming floating hazards during times of high river flows. The riparian owner is responsible for dock retrieval and removal when necessary to prevent or remove a navigation hazard.

**16.3(14) *Access for inspection.*** A dock, boat hoist, raft, platform, mooring buoy or any other structure on a public water body may be physically inspected at any time by a representative of the department as needed to determine whether it was placed and is maintained in a manner consistent with the requirements in these rules or with a permit issued under these rules.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.4(461A,462A) Class I permits for standard private docks.** This rule establishes criteria and procedures for Class I permits for private docks qualifying as standard docks under criteria in this rule and for certain other docks in areas listed in this rule.

**16.4(1) *Criteria for standard docks.*** A Class I permit for a standard dock may authorize a total of one dock and up to two hoists serving one residence. It may authorize a common dock serving two or more residences located on adjoining shoreline properties. A common dock may include up to three hoists per shoreline property and be eligible for a Class I dock permit. The dock must extend from shoreline property on which one or more of the residences are located and must meet all of the following criteria:

*a. Dock length limits.* A dock on a natural lake may extend the greater of 100 feet from the water's edge or far enough so that the outer 50 feet of the dock is in 3 feet of water up to a maximum of 300 feet from the water's edge. These lengths shall be measured from the water's edge when the dock is installed. A dock on an artificial lake or river may extend the lesser of 50 feet from the water's edge or one-fourth of the width of the waterway measured from the water's edge when the dock is installed. However, the department may give notice to a property owner that a shorter dock length is necessary to avoid interference with navigation or an adjoining property owner's access. The width of an "L" or "T" segment at the outer end of a dock is included in measuring the length of the dock.

*b. Width and configuration of docks on natural lakes.* A dock on a natural lake may have no more than one "L" or "T" segment. The total length of the "L" or "T" segment facing opposite from shore may not be greater than 20 feet including the width of the dock. The total area of the "L" or "T" segment may 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 is included in measuring the area of the "T" or "L" segment. No other part

of the dock may be more than six feet wide. Catwalks shall be at least two feet wide and considered as part of the dock. Catwalks shall be limited in length as in an “L” or “T” segment of the dock construction and may not extend beyond the width of the hoist, except that a catwalk may be extended around the hoist for access to the hoist.

*c. Compliance with standard requirements.* The dock and associated hoists must comply with the standard requirements in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A) for all docks.

*d. Other structures not authorized.* A Class I permit does not authorize placement of any other anchored or floating structure, such as a swim raft.

**16.4(2)** *Class I permits for private docks in other specified areas.* This subrule authorizes issuance of Class I permits for private docks in certain areas where circumstances, including narrowness of the water areas specified below, require different dock and hoist configurations. In the following areas, docks that fail to comply with the offset or ten-foot gap requirement in subrule 16.3(3) but that meet other standard dock requirements in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A) are eligible for a Class I permit, unless they obstruct navigation or an adjoining property owner’s access: canals off West Okoboji Lake; Okoboji Harbor; inside harbor of Harbourage at Clear Lake; Venetian Village Canal at Clear Lake; Cottage Reserve on Lake Macbride; Lake Panorama; canals at Lake Manawa; and Lake Delhi.

**16.4(3)** *Procedures for issuance of Class I dock permits.* The owner of a standard dock eligible for a Class I permit under the criteria in subrule 16.4(1) or a dock in an area specified in subrule 16.4(2) shall apply for a Class I dock permit via the department’s website. The applicant shall certify that the dock meets the criteria for a Class I permit. The department shall approve the application based on the applicant’s certification and shall assign a permit number, which may be a series of numbers or letters or a combination of numbers and letters. The applicant is responsible for obtaining stickers with the permit numbers and letters, for attaching them to the end of the dock facing opposite from the shoreline, and for displaying the 911 address as provided in subrule 16.3(5). Class I dock permits authorized by this rule are issued without administrative fee and remain valid until the property is sold or transferred. In the event the property is sold or transferred, the new owner may request to transfer the Class I dock permit as provided in subrule 16.11(1). A Class I dock permit shall be valid only while dock and hoists comply with the criteria for a Class I permit.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.5(461A,462A) Class II permits for docks authorized by governmental entities that own or otherwise control shoreline property.** This rule authorizes issuance of a Class II dock permit to a governmental entity for docks authorized by that entity to extend from public land owned or controlled by the entity. A Class II permit may include all docks and hoists authorized by a governmental entity on one water body. The Class II dock permit shall require that all docks comply with the standard requirements in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A). Class II permits may include exceptions as needed to provide continuing authorization for docks and hoists that were lawfully installed and maintained before the effective date of certain requirements as set forth in this rule. A dock on a natural lake 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 from the water’s edge. These lengths shall be measured from the water’s edge when the dock is installed. The governmental entity authorizing maintenance of a dock and boat hoists shall be responsible for enforcing the standard requirements and length limit. The department reserves authority to determine whether the requirements of rule 571—16.3(461A,462A) and the length limit are met upon complaint of a person who claims that a public or private right is adversely affected by a permitted dock. If the department determines that a dock or hoist must be moved or removed from the water body because of an adverse effect, the department shall issue an administrative order to the governmental entity that is authorizing maintenance or use of the dock and to the person who is maintaining or using the dock. Issuance of the administrative order shall trigger a right of the governmental entity and the affected person to a contested case. If shoreline property is public land but there is uncertainty concerning the relationship between the authority of the governmental entity and the authority of the department,

the Class II permit shall include a recital concerning the relative authorities of the department and the permittee. Class II permits are issued without fee and are valid until a classification change is made.  
[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.6(461A,462A) Class III permits for nonstandard private docks.** All private docks that are not authorized by Class I or Class II permits shall require a Class III dock permit. In determining whether to issue a Class III permit for a private dock or to condition the permit by denying an application in part, the department shall apply the following criteria:

**16.6(1)** A Class III private dock permit shall require docks or hoists to be in compliance with requirements in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A), except as provided in rule 571—16.8(461A,462A).

**16.6(2)** An individual private dock on a natural lake may be permitted by a Class III permit to extend 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 when the dock is installed. These lengths shall be measured from the water's edge when the dock is installed. If the water level declines after installation, additional segments may be installed during the season as needed to maintain 80 feet of dock in 3 feet of water, up to a maximum length of 300 feet from the water's edge. However, the department may give notice to a permittee that a shorter dock length is required to avoid interference with navigation or an adjoining property owner's access. The maximum permitted length of an individual private dock on an artificial lake or river is the lesser of 50 feet from the water's edge or one-fourth of the width of the waterway measured from the water's edge at normal water levels. The width of an "L" or "T" segment at the outer end of a dock is included in measuring the length of the dock.

**16.6(3)** The maximum number of hoists authorized by a Class III permit for an individual private dock is one hoist for every 10 feet of shoreline.

**16.6(4)** A Class III permit for an individual private dock on a natural lake may not authorize "L" or "T" segments containing more than a total of 240 square feet including the area of the adjoining parts of the main dock.

**16.6(5)** An individual private dock may be exempted by permit condition from the winter removal requirement in appropriate circumstances under criteria in rule 571—16.12(461A,462A).  
[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.7(461A,462A) Class IV permits for commercial docks.** In determining whether to issue a Class IV permit for a commercial dock or to condition the permit by denying an application in part, the department shall apply the following criteria:

**16.7(1)** A Class IV permit shall require docks or hoists to be in compliance with requirements in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A), except as provided in rule 571—16.8(461A,462A). Greater offsets may be required for new commercial docks or hoists if needed to minimize boat traffic and congestion that spills over in front of other shoreline property not owned or controlled by the applicant.

**16.7(2)** A commercial dock on a natural lake may be permitted to extend a maximum of 300 feet from the water's edge. However, the applicant must provide justification for a length greater than 150 feet and demonstrate that there are no appropriate alternatives available.

**16.7(3)** The maximum number of hoists or slips authorized by a permit for a commercial dock is one hoist or slip for every ten feet of shoreline. This limit shall not apply where a business operated on the shoreline property primarily involves boat sales, rentals, storage, or other boat services. In calculating the hoist limit, courtesy hoists shall not be counted if they are provided without charge to boaters to temporarily moor their boats while they go ashore to access services at a business on the shoreline property.

**16.7(4)** A permit for a commercial dock shall not be issued or the permit will include restrictions as needed to prevent uses of the dock that would be incompatible with zoning of the shoreline property from which the dock extends (including special use exceptions or variances recognized by the local governing body). However, a change in local zoning ordinance or termination of a local variance or special use exception shall not automatically be a ground for the department to revoke or refuse to renew a dock permit.

**16.7(5)** Authorization for roofs or sides on commercial docks or slips may be restricted as needed to minimize adverse visual impact on owners of other property and the public.

**16.7(6)** Each mooring site (slip) shall be marked by an identifying number or letter, in block style at least 3 inches high, of contrasting color, and located uniformly near the vessel's bow.  
[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.8(461A,462A) Exceptions for renewal of Class III and Class IV permits for existing docks.** This rule provides certain exceptions to length limits, hoist limits and platform size limits for docks and hoists that lawfully existed before the effective date of the limits. Criteria for exceptions to offset requirements are separately listed in subrule 16.8(2). Exceptions under this rule are granted at the discretion of the department.

**16.8(1)** Class III and Class IV permits shall include exceptions as needed to provide continuing authorization for docks and hoists that were lawfully installed and maintained before the effective date of certain requirements as set forth in this rule. Permits shall include exceptions to the length limits in subrules 16.6(2) and 16.7(2) for docks up to 300 feet long that were lawfully installed and maintained before the effective date of the length limits. Permits shall include exceptions to the hoist limit in subrules 16.6(3) and 16.7(3), and to the platform size limit in subrule 16.6(4) for docks and hoists that were lawfully installed and maintained before the effective date of the limits. Any exceptions granted for such docks will expire upon sale or transfer of the property.

**16.8(2)** An exception to the offset requirements in subrule 16.3(3) shall be granted if the applicant can satisfy all three of the following criteria:

*a.* The lack of offset on one side of the property is compensated for by a larger offset on the other side of the property;

*b.* The applicant provides the department with a copy of the written consent of each affected adjoining property owner or an affidavit attesting that the affected adjacent property owner named in the affidavit has verbally given the applicant consent for the requested exception, or provides adequate documentation that the adjoining shoreline parcel is burdened by restrictive covenants, easements, or other valid use restrictions that impose on the owner of the parcel an obligation to tolerate docks and hoists that would otherwise violate the offset or gap requirements in subrule 16.3(3); and

*c.* The applicant demonstrates that no other dock or hoist configuration is physically practical.  
[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.9(461A,462A) Initial decision and right of appeal.** The decision on an application for a Class II, Class III or Class IV permit shall be provided in writing and may grant the permit, grant the permit with specific conditions, or deny the permit. If the decision is to deny the permit or to issue a permit with specific conditions that deny the application in part, the written decision shall include notice of the applicant's right to request a contested case under 571—Chapter 7. An applicant's request for a contested case may include a request for a waiver under the provisions of Iowa Code section 17A.9A and 571—Chapter 11.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.10(461A,462A) Application and administrative fees.**

**16.10(1)** The applicant for a Class II, Class III or Class IV permit shall apply via the department's website. If the applicant for a Class III or Class IV permit is not the owner of the shoreline property from which the dock extends, the applicant shall identify the contractual relationship between the applicant and each property owner and shall submit as part of the application the written consent from each owner. The application shall be accompanied by plans and drawings that accurately show the size and location of each boat hoist, slip, platform, catwalk, buoy, or other structure to be maintained in front of the shoreline property. Docks in front of nonadjoining shoreline properties on the same water body owned by the same person or legal entity may be included in one application. An application for renewal of a permit for an existing dock and hoists must specifically describe each requested modification. The applicant shall submit an administrative fee with the application. The application will be assigned to a conservation officer to investigate.

**16.10(2)** The Class III permit application fee shall be \$125 for one or more individual private docks. The Class IV permit application fee shall be \$250 for one or more commercial docks. A Class III permittee shall pay an annual administrative fee of \$50 for each hoist or slip in excess of a total of four hoists or slips. A Class IV permittee shall pay an annual administrative fee of \$50 for each hoist or slip in excess of a total of six hoists or slips, except for each hoist or slip designated in the permit as courtesy mooring for customers and affixed with a sign identifying it as a courtesy hoist or slip. The hoist/slip fee is due on March 1 of each year or whenever a permit is modified by adding a hoist or slip. Any fees owed to the department shall be paid in full prior to the installation of any portion of an individual private dock or commercial dock and before a boat is placed in a hoist or slip. The department may waive the permit application fee if the application is for a minor modification of an existing permit without an extension of the term of the permit.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.11(461A,462A) Duration and transferability of permits; refund of application fees; suspension, modification, or revocation of permits; complaint investigation; property line location.**

**16.11(1)** *Duration and transferability of dock permits; administrative fee refunds.* With the exception of Class I dock permits, each dock permit shall be issued for a term of five years unless a shorter term is needed due to specified circumstances. The administrative fee paid with an application is nonrefundable unless the application is withdrawn before the department incurs administrative expense in investigating the application. A dock permit is transferable to a new owner of the shoreline property upon request to the department by the new owner; however, if the permit contains exceptions pursuant to rule 571—16.8(461A,462A), those exceptions shall expire upon transfer, and the new owner shall immediately bring the dock into compliance with all current rules.

**16.11(2)** *Suspension, modification, or revocation of permits.* A dock permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked, in whole or in part, by written notice served in compliance with Iowa Code section 17A.18, if the director determines that the dock is a hazard to other users of the water body, that a violation of any terms or conditions of the permit has occurred, or that continuation of the permit is contrary to the public interest. Such modification, suspension, or revocation is effective upon a date specified in the notice. The notice shall state the extent of the modification, suspension, or revocation, the reasons for the action, and any corrective or preventative measures to be taken by the permittee to bring the dock, structure, or activity into compliance. Within 30 days following receipt of the notice of a revocation or modification, or during the course of a suspension, the permittee may request a hearing in order to present information demonstrating that the alleged violation did not occur or that required corrective and preventative measures have been taken, or to present any other information relevant to a decision as to whether the permit should be reinstated, modified, or revoked. The hearing shall be conducted as prescribed by 571—Chapter 7. After completion of the hearing, a final decision will be made concerning the status of the permit. In the event that no hearing is requested, notices of modification and revocation shall remain in effect, and suspended permits shall be reinstated, modified, or revoked. These procedures are not intended to limit the authority of a department law enforcement officer to issue a citation for a violation of a provision of Iowa Code chapter 461A or 462A, or a provision in this chapter.

**16.11(3)** *Investigation of complaints.* Any person adversely affected by a permitted dock or associated boat hoist may request, in writing, an investigation and a hearing to reconsider the permit. Requests for hearings shall specify adverse effects on the complainant and shall be made in accordance with procedures described in 571—Chapter 7.

**16.11(4)** *Determining property boundaries.* An applicant for a permit, a permittee, and an owner of shoreline property adjoining property of an applicant or permittee are responsible for determining the accurate location of common boundaries of their respective properties.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.12(461A,462A) Exemptions from winter removal requirement.** This rule provides for exemptions from the general requirement in Iowa Code section 462A.27 that nonpermanent structures

be removed on or before December 15 of each year. Docks and other structures subject to destruction or damage by ice movement must be removed. Where a dock may be left in ice without damage to the dock, it must have reflective material visible from all directions to operators of snowmobiles, other motorized machines, or wind-propelled vessels lawfully operated on the frozen surface of the water body. Generally, ice damage is greatest on Iowa's rivers and natural lakes. Docks must be removed by December 15 of each year unless they have the required reflective materials and are specifically exempted by a condition of a dock permit or are located in one of the areas listed as follows: artificial lakes; Upper Gar Lake; canals off West Okoboji Lake; Okoboji Harbor; Lazy Lagoon portion of Triboji dock management area; Smith's Bay on West Okoboji Lake; area between the trestle and U.S. Highway 71 bridges on Okoboji lakes; Templar Park on Big Spirit Lake; Venetian Village Canal and Harbourage Inlet on Clear Lake; Casino Bay of Storm Lake; Black Hawk Marina at Black Hawk Lake; and canals off Lake Manawa and Carter Lake. A permit shall not authorize an exception from the winter removal requirement unless the applicant provides adequate documentation that the dock will not be damaged by normal ice movement.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.13(461A,462A) General conditions of all dock permits.** All dock permits, unless specifically excepted by another provision of this chapter, shall include the following conditions of approval:

**16.13(1)** The permit creates no interests, personal or real, in the real estate below the ordinary high-water mark nor does it relieve the requirement to obtain federal or local authorization when required by law for such activity. The permit does not authorize the permittee to prevent the public from using areas of the water body adjacent to the permitted structure. However, a lawfully permitted private dock or commercial dock is property of the permittee. Use of the dock is reserved to the permittee and the permittee's invitees, subject to the public right of passage stated in subrule 16.3(2).

**16.13(2)** A permit is valid only while the permittee has the necessary permissions to use the adjoining shoreline property from which the dock projects.

**16.13(3)** The permittee shall not charge a fee for use of the dock or associated structure unless: the permit is for a commercial dock; the fee is expressly authorized by the permit; or the permittee is a homeowners association and the fee is for recovery of expenses incurred in providing access to association members.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.14(461A,462A) Permit criteria for rafts, platforms, or other structures.** A raft, platform, or other structure maintained on a public water body requires authorization in a permit. The raft, platform, or other structure may not be placed more than 250 feet from the shoreline, shall be equipped with reflectors that are visible from approaching boats, and shall be subject to the winter removal requirement unless specifically exempted by the permit.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

DIVISION II  
DOCK MANAGEMENT AREAS

**571—16.15(461A) Designation or modification of dock management areas.**

**16.15(1)** *Purposes and status of dock management areas.* The director may designate an area of public land under the commission's jurisdiction and adjoining water as a dock management area. The primary purpose of dock management areas is to accommodate requests for boating access from owners of properties that are close to a water body but do not include riparian or littoral property rights. Dock permittees have priority use of the docks for mooring of vessels. However, the docks may be used by members of the public at their own risk for fishing and emergency mooring when public use does not interfere with the permittee's use. Other uses allowed by the permittee shall be the responsibility of the permittee.



**16.15(2) Criteria for designation or enlargement.** In designating a dock management area or authorizing enlargement of an existing dock management area, the director shall apply the following criteria:

*a.* The shoreline property in question shall be public land and shall have been developed and managed for recreational access to water or determined by the department to be suitable for such access.

*b.* The establishment or enlargement of a dock management area shall not adversely affect other public recreational use of the water body.

*c.* A dock management area shall not be established or enlarged where depth or bottom configuration is incompatible with the placement of docks.

*d.* A dock management area shall not be established or enlarged where fish and wildlife habitat, other natural resources or scenic features would be disturbed by the presence of docks.

*e.* Documentation of need for a new or larger dock management area and the lack of adverse impacts of the proposal must be sufficient to clearly outweigh and overcome a presumption against increasing the number or size of dock management areas.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.16(461A) Procedures and policies for dock site permits and hoist or slip assignments in dock management areas.**

**16.16(1) Application permit and slip assignment.** A dock site permit authorizes a person to install and maintain a dock in a designated dock management area. Each permit shall identify the number of hoists or slips to be included for storage of boats at the dock. A separate hoist or slip assignment will be issued for each hoist or slip space at the dock. For purposes of these dock management area rules, “permittee” means the person(s) to whom a dock site permit is issued and the person(s) to whom each hoist or slip assignment is issued. Application forms for dock site permits and hoist or slip assignments in a dock management area shall be made available at a nearby DNR office.

**16.16(2) Priority selection process.** Dock site permits and hoist or slip assignments shall be available to all members of the public through a selection process based on the following order of priorities. A waiting list shall be established that follows the same order of priorities. First priority is for owners of residences adjoining or immediately across a street from the public land; second priority is for owners of other residences within the housing association or subdivision adjoining or immediately across a street from the public land; third priority is for all other Iowa residents; fourth priority is for nonresidents. The order of priorities, changes in the number of residential units per dock site, and changes in the number of vessels per residential unit will be made effective as existing permits expire. A permittee who has a valid hoist or slip assignment will not lose their assignment to a new higher priority applicant if the permit is renewed prior to it expiring at the end of the five-year term and payment is received by the deadline established in rule 571—16.19(461A). If the permittee fails to renew the permit, the permittee may be placed on the waiting list and the highest person on the waiting list will be offered the open hoist or slip assignment. Any permittee who moves to a new residence may be considered a new applicant when the current permit expires at the end of the five-year term. The permittee will be placed on the waiting list based on the new address, and the highest person on the waiting list will be offered the open hoist or slip assignment. For purposes of these dock management area rules, “residence” means a single residential living unit, which may be a rental unit. Notwithstanding these priorities, if property in the first or second priority category is redeveloped with higher density residential living units, there is no assurance that dock, hoist or slip space will be available to accommodate such increased density before other property included in the first or second priority categories.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.17(461A) Standard requirements for dock management area docks.** Docks in dock management areas shall conform to the following requirements:

**16.17(1) Occupancy of docks.** At least two residences shall share a dock. The department may require that more residences share a dock if there is a waiting list including people in the first or second priority categories established in rule 571—16.16(461A). A maximum of six residences shall share a dock.

**16.17(2) Spacing and alignment.** Dock sites where feasible shall be at least 50 feet apart.

**16.17(3) Dimensions.**

*a. Length.* 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.

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

**16.17(4) Configuration.**

*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.

**16.17(5) Exceptions for certain dock management areas.** Notwithstanding other provisions in this rule, in artificially constructed lagoon or harbor areas, the configuration and dimensions of the docks, catwalks and hoists shall be determined by the department on an individual basis, taking into consideration the physical characteristics of the area, the mooring pattern of boats and public safety. 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.

**16.17(6) Display of dock management area sign, DMA name and dock site number.** The end of the dock facing the water shall be marked with the DMA name and dock number as assigned by the department. Each hoist shall also be marked with the hoist assignee's last name and dock site number in two-inch block letters on one of the upright poles. The dock site permittee shall be responsible for installing and maintaining a sign provided by DNR at the landward entrance to the dock. The sign shall state that the dock is privately constructed; it shall include a caution to members of the public with the statement "use at your own risk"; and it shall include the statement "no diving" with a drawing of a diver over which is superimposed the universal no symbol (a circle with a diagonal slash through it).

**16.17(7) Other requirements.** Standard requirements found in rule 571—16.3(461A,462A) shall apply to all docks in a dock management area except requirements relating to property line offsets and display of information.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.18(461A) Dock management area permit restrictions and conditions.** The following conditions and restrictions shall apply to docks in a dock management area.

**16.18(1) Use of dock for mooring.** Only the persons named as permittees shall have use of the dock for mooring. All vessels must be registered to the permittees and listed on the dock management area permit. A dock site permit or hoist/slip assignment may authorize an exception to allow a vessel of a tenant of the permittee's residential rental unit.

**16.18(2) Equitable sharing of dock costs.** Permittees shall agree on the equitable sharing of the cost of construction, installation, maintenance and removal of the dock and any other component of the dock. In no case shall a dock owner collect more money from hoist/slip permittees than is needed to cover legitimate dock costs nor make a profit from operating the dock. Doing so is grounds for suspension and/or revocation of the dock permit.

**16.18(3) Number of assignments allowed.** Only one dock assignment may be allocated to a residence.

**16.18(4) Number of hoists allowed.** Each permittee may be limited to one hoist for one vessel. The number of hoists and vessels for each permittee should be limited, especially when there is a waiting list that includes people in the first or second priority category established in rule 571—16.16(461A).

**16.18(5) Nontransferability of dock permits and privileges.** Dock permits and hoist or slip assignments shall not be transferred, assigned or conveyed by the permittee to any other person.

**16.18(6) Liability insurance.** Prior to constructing a dock or installing hoists, the dock site permittee shall provide proof of a current liability insurance policy in the amount of \$1 million.

**16.18(7) Winter storage of docks, catwalks and hoists on public property.** Winter storage of docks, catwalks and hoists on public property shall not be allowed unless specifically authorized by a dock site permit or hoist assignment. Docks, hoists and catwalks shall be stored at locations determined by the state parks bureau district supervisor as appropriate for an individual dock management area. A dock, catwalk or hoist stored on public land without authorization from the department may be removed by the department at the owner's expense.

**16.18(8) Land use restrictions.** Nothing shall be constructed or placed on public land adjacent to any dock in a dock management area under this rule unless the construction or placement is a necessary appurtenance to the dock as determined by the director.

**16.18(9) Expiration of permits.** The term of a dock site permit and a hoist or slip assignment shall not exceed five years. Renewals shall be requested on a current application form. A permit expires when the permittee fails to apply for renewal prior to the current permit's expiration date.

**16.18(10) Cancellation for nonuse.** A dock site permit or hoist/slip assignment may be canceled for nonuse if the dock or hoist/slip is not used at least one time each calendar year in order to provide space for applicants on a waiting list.

**16.18(11) Other permit restrictions and conditions.** All restrictions and conditions in rule 571—16.13(461A,462A), except subrule 16.13(2), shall apply to all docks in a dock management area. [ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.19(461A) Fees for docks in dock management areas.** Payment of the annual dock site permit fee shall be made upon application. Payment of the annual hoist or slip fee shall be made upon application for the hoist or slip assignment. These fees may be paid in a lump sum in advance for the term of the permit or assignment. Failure to pay the annual fee by April 1 of any year may result in revocation or cancellation of the permit or assignment. Payment of any dock management area fee under this rule shall be made to the department of natural resources as specified in the permit. Annual fees are as follows:

	Dock Fee	Hoist Fee
Beed's Lake	\$100	\$50
Black Hawk Lake Marina	\$200	\$50
Black Hawk Lake/Denison	\$200	\$50
Black Hawk North Shore	\$200	\$50
Blue Lake	\$100	\$50
Clear Lake Ventura Heights	\$250	\$50
Clear Lake Harbourage	\$600	\$100 - hoist or slip fee
Clear Lake North Shore	\$250	\$50
East Okoboji Beach	\$250	\$50
Triboji Lakeshore	\$250	\$50
Triboji Lazy Lagoon	\$250	\$50 - hoist or slip fee
Pillsbury Point	\$250	\$50

Lower Pine Lake	\$100	\$50
Lake Macbride The Pines	\$600	\$100 - slip fee
Lake Macbride Lakecrest	\$600	\$100 - slip fee
Rice Lake	\$100	\$50
Union Grove	\$100	\$50
Lake Odessa	\$100	\$25

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.20(461A) Suspension, modification or revocation of dock management area permits.** A dock management area permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked, in whole or in part, by written notice, if the director determines that the dock is not safe, that a violation of any terms or conditions of the permit or these rules has occurred, or that continuation of the permit is not in the public interest. Such modification, suspension, or revocation shall become effective upon a date specified in the notice. The notice shall state the extent of the modification, suspension, or revocation, the reasons for the action, and any corrective or preventative measures to be taken by the permittee to bring the dock, structure, or activity into compliance. Within 30 days following receipt of the notice of a revocation or modification, or during the course of a suspension, the permittee may file a notice of appeal, requesting a contested case pursuant to 571—Chapter 7. The notice of appeal shall specify the basis for requesting that the permit be reinstated.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

**571—16.21(461A) Persons affected by DMA permit—hearing request.** Any person who claims that riparian or littoral property rights are adversely affected by a DMA dock site permit may request, in writing, a hearing to reconsider the permit. Requests for hearings shall show cause and shall be made in accordance with procedures described in 571—Chapter 7.

[ARC 7894C, IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 461A.4, 461A.11, 461A.18, 462A.27 and 462A.32.

[Filed 10/1/73]

[Filed 11/12/76, Notice 9/8/76—published 12/1/76, effective 1/14/77]

[Filed 11/9/78, Notice 7/26/78—published 11/29/78, effective 1/3/79]

[Filed 1/18/79, Notice 8/9/78—published 2/7/79, effective 3/19/79]

[Filed 7/6/79, Notice 5/2/79—published 7/25/79, effective 8/29/79]

[Filed 9/2/82, Notice 7/7/82—published 9/29/82, effective 11/3/82]

[Filed 7/8/83, Notice 3/2/83—published 8/3/83, effective 9/8/83]

[Filed 11/14/85, Notice 8/28/85—published 12/4/85, effective 1/8/86]

[Filed without Notice 12/12/86—published 12/31/86, effective 2/4/87]

[Filed 2/5/88, Notice 12/2/87—published 2/24/88, effective 3/30/88]

[Filed 5/20/94, Notice 3/2/94—published 6/8/94, effective 7/13/94]

[Filed 6/27/97, Notice 4/9/97—published 7/16/97, effective 8/20/97]

[Filed 11/14/97, Notice 9/10/97—published 12/3/97, effective 1/7/98]

[Filed 6/9/00, Notice 4/5/00—published 6/28/00, effective 8/2/00]

[Filed 9/13/02, Notice 3/6/02—published 10/2/02, effective 11/6/02]

[Filed 2/8/07, Notice 11/8/06—published 2/28/07, effective 4/4/07]

[Filed ARC 3795C (Notice ARC 3626C, IAB 2/14/18), IAB 5/9/18, effective 6/13/18]

[Filed ARC 6194C (Notice ARC 6028C, IAB 11/3/21), IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

[Filed ARC 7894C (Notice ARC 7255C, IAB 12/27/23), IAB 5/1/24, effective 6/5/24]