

STRATFORD INLAND WATER DOCK GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

Docks are common features on the shorelines of lakes, ponds, and rivers and are an important part of the recreational use of these waterbodies. The shoreline in front of any property is generally also an important component of the wetlands and watercourses area that needs to be preserved and protected. The improper building or maintenance of a dock can disrupt and damage this important environmental habitat. Consequently, specific use, design, construction and maintenance guidelines have been established to minimize the potential impact on this valuable natural resource.

Please note: The construction of any new dock (or the enlargement or significant modification of an existing dock) in an area under the jurisdiction of the Stratford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency must follow the review and approval process specified in the Town of Stratford IWWA regulations. The guidelines summarized below are intended solely to aid in the submission of dock plans and execution of dock construction/maintenance activities that comply with these requirements.

DOCK GUIDELINES

Purpose of Dock

- Docks are for the private, non-commercial use of the resident(s) and their invited guest(s) only.
- A maximum of one dock is permitted for each primary residence (a dock may be shared by more than one residence and if so, it may be larger than otherwise permitted for docks used by single residences.)
- Docks are intended to be used for passive recreation and thereby support the use and enjoyment of the adjacent water body such as the mooring of watercraft (e.g. , rowboats, canoes, kayaks, sailboats, etc.)
- Dangerous or toxic materials are not to be stored on docks

DOCK PLACEMENT AND CONFIGURATION

- Docks should be sited to minimize disturbing wetlands vegetation in or adjacent to the waterbody, including the normal area used to access the dock
- Docks should be placed at an elevation just above the ordinary high water line to allow for egress to a boat

- A minimum of 20 feet of undisturbed shoreline should be maintained between adjacent docks.
- Docks should be located to ensure that any boats moored there do not extend across the adjacent property line.
- Docks may be oriented perpendicular or parallel to the shoreline or use other designs (such as a “T”)

DOCK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- The maximum allowable square footage for any dock is 120 square feet.
 - An exception may be granted if a larger structure is necessary to reach navigable water or as stated previously, a dock serves more than one residence.
- The minimum dimension (width or length) is 3 feet.
- The length and location of the dock should coincide with the minimum distance necessary to reach navigable water at the mean low water line, and watercourse, and upland review area.

DOCK DESIGN AND THE CONSTRUCTION

- Docks may be free floating or constructed on piles.
 - Free floating docks are preferred because this allows the removal of docks in the winter which mitigates ice damage and minimizes any disturbance to the pond/lake bed.
 - For docks constructed on piles, pile are to be installed by pile driving or auguring (using “jetting” with high pressure hoses is not permitted because it typically disturbs the surrounding are with potential adverse environmental impacts.)
- Docks may have fascia or “skirts” around the perimeter to help prevent the accumulation of debris under the dock.
- Docks should be fastened to the shoreline in a manner that:
 - Minimizes any disturbance to the existing shoreline
 - Securely anchors the dock in place
 - Inhibits significant shifting of position during storm events
- Harmful substances such as paint, stain, sediment, and preservatives should be prevented from entering the waterbody (for example, during construction,

lumber should be cut/stained/sealed away from the water and completely dry before being used near the waterbody.)

- Railing are permitted provided they are safe and structurally sound.
- If a catwalk is required to access the dock, it should be between 3 and 4 feet wide, and be the minimum length needed to reach the dock itself.
- Effective sediment and erosion control measures should be installed before starting work on the construction or removal of any dock and the shoreline is to be restored to its original condition if any disturbance occurs.

DOCK MATERIALS

- Docks, floats, and ramps/stairs should be constructed of materials that are impact resistant, non-corrosive, and naturally rot resistant, acceptable materials include:
 - Woods such as cedar, fir, chestnut, hemlock, black locust, and environmentally acceptable pressure treated lumber
 - Woods such as cedar, fir, chestnut, hemlock, black locust, and environmentally acceptable pressure treated lumber (the use of chromated copper arsenate (CCA) or creosote treated wood is prohibited because these materials may contain compounds that can be released into the water and become toxic to the aquatic environment)
 - Metal, aluminum and plastic.
- Flotation material should be completely enclosed to maximize the useful life of the material by preventing the materials from being chewed by animals, from breaking apart, or from floating away.
 - Polystyrene, polymethane, or polyurethane blocks provide excellent flotation.
 - The use of metal drums or rubber tires is prohibited, as is foam core, which is prone to rapid deterioration.
- Only exterior grade paints/sealers should be used on docks.

DOCK MAINTENANCE

- Docks should be maintained to ensure there is no significant deterioration in their safety and structural soundness, and to ensure their ongoing use causes minimal environmental impact.

- Dock materials (such as flotation devices) that have deteriorated to the point of losing their intended purpose or polluting the water-body should be replaced, repaired or removed.
- Any structural, safety or environmentally harmful deficiencies should be addressed in a timely manner.

MITIGATION AND VEGETATION REQUIREMENTS

- To mitigate the impact of any new dock (or the enlargement or significant modification of an existing dock) constructed in a wetland, watercourse, or upland review area, a portion of the shoreline should be vegetated.
- Specifically, 100% of the shoreline (aside from the dock width) should be planted to provide 10 feet of acceptable vegetated buffer OR 70% of the shoreline should be planted to provide 15 feet of acceptable vegetated buffer.

If you should have any questions or comments regarding the following, please contact the Stratford Conservation Department at (203) 385-4006.