

Pier, Dock and Wharf Regulations

The following summarizes State and local laws and regulations that govern piers, docks and wharves. For full content, please visit the website referenced below.

Only a riparian (lakefront) owner may place and maintain a pier, dock or wharf. Riparian owners may not grant riparian rights to others and may not permit others to place a pier on their property.

Although the WI DNR generally requires that a permit be obtained to place a pier, a riparian owner **does not need a WI DNR pier permit** for a new or replacement pier if the pier, dock or wharf meets **either #1 or #2** of the following*:

1. It was in place prior to April, 2012 and was "grandfathered;" such a pier, dock or wharf may be replaced or maintained but not enlarged unless it meets all criteria at #2 below
2. All of the following criteria are satisfied:
 - a. It is long enough to attain a 3 ft. water depth or an adequate depth for a boat lift or mooring, whichever is greater, per the DNR, but it cannot be longer than 50 ft. per Whitewater and Richmond regulations.
 - b. It is not wider than 6 ft., except a loading platform which may be no greater than 200 sq. ft. (including the pier portion); "L" or "T" or catwalks are allowed
 - c. It has no more than 2 boat slips for the first 50 ft. of shoreline, and 1 additional slip for each additional full 50 ft. of shoreline; a "slip" is anything used to store a boat, whether the boat is on a pier, lift or mooring.
 - d. It has no more than 2 PWC's for the first 50 ft. of shoreline, and 1 additional PWC for each additional full 50 ft. of shoreline.
 - e. It is located entirely within the riparian's zone of interest, including any boats, boat shelters, hoists or lifts associated with it.

*Please see the WI DNR website for full requirements and to apply for a pier permit.
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Waterways/recreation/piers.html>