



Q&A Transport of Watercraft and Lakeshore Equipment From Infested Waters in Minnesota

August 30, 2010

Q. What regulations apply to boats, trailers, equipment, and water as they enter or leave lakes and rivers, or when transported on a public road?

A. State Regulations related to invasive species are located in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 84D and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6216. Under those regulations:

- It is **illegal** to transport any aquatic plants or prohibited invasive species on boats, trailers, and equipment (including weed rollers, boat lifts, docks, swim rafts) on public roads, except under permit or as specified by the DNR.
- It is **illegal** to transport water from all designated infested waters without a permit.
- At all waters, a person **must** *“drain boating-related equipment holding water and live wells and bilges by removing the drain plug before transporting the watercraft and associated equipment on public roads. Drain plugs, bailers, valves, or other devices used to control the draining of water from ballast tanks, bilges, and live wells must be removed or opened while transporting watercraft on a public road. Marine sanitary systems and portable bait containers are excluded from this requirement.”*
- At zebra mussel or spiny waterflea infested waters, water **must** also be drained from portable bait buckets.
- It is **illegal** to launch or attempt to launch a boat/trailer with aquatic plants or prohibited species (e.g., zebra mussel) attached.
- It is illegal to place any object, such as docks, boat lifts, swim rafts into a waterbody if it has any nonnative species (e.g., zebra mussels, snails, spiny waterfleas) attached.

Q. What steps do commercial boat storage, boat services, and dock and lift businesses need to take when removing watercraft, docks, and lifts from Lake Minnetonka and transporting them on a public road?

A. There are two options for them:

1. They can follow the steps required by law before leaving the water access (draining all water, removing **all** aquatic plants and zebra mussels; or
2. They can apply for DNR permits to allow watercraft to be transported, and in some cases drained, at their own or another commercial cleaning facility. Permits will cover the transport to a cleaning facility. Watercraft and equipment leaving the facility after cleaning will not be covered by the permit and must comply with state transport and launching regulations. Permits conditions will require: 1) hand cleaning of visible and accessible plants and zebra mussels from the boat and trailers at the water access, and 2) thorough hot-water power washing of the hull and motor parts exposed to the water to remove all zebra mussels, including portions of the hull that may have grates covering them; and 3) draining water from bilge, livewells, motor, and other boat components holding lake water.

Q. How do businesses apply for a permit to transport prohibited invasive species and infested water?

A. To obtain permit information contact Jay Rendall, DNR Invasive Species Prevention Coordinator, at jay.rendall@state.mn.us or 651-259-5131.

Q. Can boats and equipment be moved within a lake if they have zebra mussels attached? (For example, when a dock or boatlift is sold by a Lake Minnetonka resident to another Lake Minnetonka resident and transported by barge)

A. Yes, the state law excludes the movement of a prohibited invasive species, such as the zebra mussel, or infested water within a waterbody from the definition of transport. However, it is recommended that as a best management practice to avoid moving equipment from lower Lake Minnetonka to the upper part of the lake because no zebra mussels have been found in that part of lake.

Q. Can boats and equipment with attached aquatic plants or zebra mussels be moved on a public road without a permit or special authorization?

A. No, whether the person is the boat owner, a boat storage business, or a commercial boat transporter, it is illegal to transport aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species such as zebra mussels on a public road, except by permit or as specified by the DNR. Permits for transporting boats and lake equipment for service and winter storage may be issued to facilitate cleaning of the boats and equipment at off lake locations.

Q. Can boats and equipment be moved from the lake onto the shore of lakeshore property if they have zebra mussels attached?

A. Yes, the focus of state transport laws is on boats and equipment being moved away from the infested waters, especially on a public road.

Q. Do docks and boatlifts need to be cleaned before they are placed back into the lake?

A. Docks, swim rafts, and boat lifts that are removed from an infested water with prohibited invasive species or other nonnative species attached, for maintenance or winter storage while on the riparian property (without transporting on a public road), may be returned to the same water body without removing the prohibited or invasive species.

Q. Where should a person or business dispose of adult zebra mussels after cleaning?

A. Zebra mussels that have been removed from a boat, boat lift or other equipment can be disposed of if the person follows these steps:

- dries the aquatic plants and zebra mussels for 5 days prior to transporting;
- transports aquatic plants and zebra mussels in a covered trailer, covered container, or wrapped the material sufficiently to keep plants from being blown out during transporting;
- lawfully disposes all the plants and attached material at least 300 feet from riparian areas, ditches, or seasonally flooded lands;
- cleans all plants and zebra mussels from the conveyance device (e.g., trailer, pickup truck) and any cover materials at the disposal site; and
- fills out a DNR authorization form before transporting.

Q. What should a boat owner do if they are transporting their boat from a zebra mussel infested lake to a winter storage location?

A. It depends upon several factors:

- If the boat was stored on a boatlift and there are not any attached zebra mussels, when removing the boat from the water — boat owners should remove any aquatic plants from the trailer and boat, drain water, and remove the drain plug before transporting.
- If the boat was stored in the water and there are visible zebra mussels attached, there are a few options. A boat owner can either:
 - A. take the boat to a **marina** for cleaning before transporting to the winter storage location;
 - B. complete and follow a DNR transport **authorization form** that authorizes a person to transport a boat with zebra mussels attached to a cleaning location; or
 - C. remove the boat at a **riparian property** and store it there.

Q. Who can answer further questions about the regulations and enforcement?

A. The following people can provide information about the water draining regulations and enforcement:

- Jay Rendall, DNR Invasive Species Prevention Coordinator 651-259-5131; jay.rendall@state.mn.us
- Captain Phil Meier, DNR Southwest Region Enforcement Manager 507-359-6040; phil.meier@state.mn.us
- Invasive species Specialists - see list at: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/contact/eco_invasivesstaff.pdf