Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Laws and Requirements:

The DNR lists lakes and rivers as “infested” with certain aquatic invasive species. If you are harvesting bait, commercial fishing, or shoreline or taking water, you might need to follow special regulations in infested waters.

To identify an infested lake, look for orange Invasive Species Alert signs at the access. You can also use LakeFinder to find out if a particular lake is listed as infested. Minnesota.gov/lakefinder for more information about infested waters, including an up-to-date infestation list and additional location information, and mndnr.gov/infisps.

Before leaving the water access or shoreline property, you MUST:
- Clean ALL aquatic plants and animals
- Drain water including live wells, baitwells, ballast tanks, motor, and ballast tanks
- De-foul the plug and anchor to cut off ALL aquatic plants and animals

Get the intent of taking these three simple steps, and it will soon become part of your routine. Pull away from the boat ramp area. Check for and remove plants while stopping the boat down. Pull the plug when adjusting the motor. If you have other people (personally or boats) with you, have them help! Adding a few minutes will help safeguard our waters.

Cleaning water-related equipment is just as important as cleaning baits, so while you’re cleaning your boat, please remember to also:
- Clean anchors, ropes, fishing tackle, and other objects that were in the water. Many species can be transported in the mud or by fishing lines and rope
- Drain water out of canoes, kayaks, and other watercraft before leaving
- Dump water out of canoes, kayaks, and other watercraft before leaving

These are YOUR waters and it is YOUR responsibility to inspect, clean, and drain your boats!

AIS Bait Laws

It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your boat (reserves or lakeshore), the DNR recommends bringing “fish safe” treated water from home and keeping it in your vehicle or cooler. Draining it can be a good idea on warm days to cool down the water.

DO NOT dump unwanted bait into water bodies or on the shore. Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated compost bin. Unwanted worms must be disposed of in the trash.

Working Together to Protect the Waters

Watercraft inspectors are here to ensure watercraft and equipment are “clean, in, clean out.” If you need assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask!

Way you can help the Watercraft Inspectors:
- Please drain your boat and pull your plug as soon as you are safely able to. That way when the inspector comes, the inspection process will move quickly.
- If you’re in a Decommissioned boat please follow all the instructions given by the inspectors, for your safety and theirs. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and watch them work from a safe distance.

Way the Watercraft Inspectors can help you:
- The inspectors face boxes, wheeled bins, and so if you are having trouble with your plug, ask the inspectors. The inspectors can also help pull weeds off boats or other such tanks. They also have grab tools for plants.

When you see the Watercraft Inspectors, please be cooperative. The law requires compliance with inspectors, and it will help everyone to be on their way in a timely and pleasant manner.

Accessible Accesses

Public water access sites developed after 2002 have been designed with accessible parking spaces and accessible routes to the top of the boat ramp. Some sites have additional accessible routes to a dock or other site amenities. These sites are identified with the red, accessible symbol shown above.

Some persons with disabilities may request this information in an alternative format. See the table on the right for specific site information.

The DNR boating programs are funded by user fees and shorefishing sites. See the table on the right for specific site information.

Accessible Accesses

Public Water Accesses in Grant & Stevens Counties

The DNR cooperates with a variety of local units of government to maintain the fishing piers.

Sometimes, weather or vandalism can make these designed sites no longer accessible. If a site is found to be out of compliance, please report problems to the site administrator listed in this guide, or Contact the DNR Information Center, 1-888-646-6367. To purchase a license by phone 24 hours a day, call 1-888-MN-ININS (888-664-6267). To purchase a license online, visit mndnr.gov/invasives.

© Take Me Fishing

The DNR Information Center is available to provide free publications of facilities and services as well as answers questions pertaining to DNR recreational opportunities in Minnesota. 1-888-MN-ININS (888-664-6267). To purchase a license online, visit mndnr.gov/invasives.

The DNR Water Access Program provides approximately 1,650 boat accesses, over 365 fishing piers and shore fishing sites and manages 35 designated Water Trails in Minnesota. The DNR, Federal Government and local communities cooperate to access. See the table on the right for specific site information.

Public water access sites are usually open 24 hours unless otherwise posted. Most sites have launch ramps but some sites, especially on smaller rivers, are carry in only. Bathrooms and docks are usually located only on the larger and busier accesses.

Public Water Access Areas - The launch area must be kept clean and the following activities are unlawful: littering, camping, row boating, building fires, and consuming alcoholic beverages. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 6218 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota

The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summaries Minnesota’s boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read format. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the river, legal requirements, operator age restrictions, etc. Contact the DNR License Bureau for information.

Fishing in Minnesota

Fishing Regulations and Licensing -8 persons 16 and older are required to have the appropriate license with them when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR license bureau, most County Auditor’s offices and many stores that sell fishing related goods. License requires a $10.fine. For more information call the DNR Information Center at (651) 296-6577 or (800) 936-3472. Call 1-888-MN-ININS (664-6267) for information.

Selective Harvest Fishing - improved technology and increased fishing has caused the quality of fishing to decline in many waters. Practicing “Selective Harvest” offers anglers an opportunity to make some fish for home while releasing others back into the water to improve fishing quality. Here are some tips to use for effective Selective-Harvest Fishing:
- Use barless hooks
- Play the fish quickly and handle the fish carefully
- Never hold the fish by the gills
- Use a needle nose pliers to remove hooks or cut the line if it is too deep
- Ease the fish back into the water, do not throw it back

Safe Boating

Life Jackets - On all boats (except a sailboard) regardless of length there must be a readily accessible Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket for each person on board. In addition, on boats 26 feet or longer, except canoes and kayaks, there must also be at least one Coast Guard approved throwable device, such as a ring buoy or vest cushion.

Boating While Intoxicated (DWI) - Boating while intoxicated is illegal. For persons found to be under the influence there are significant penalties, fines and possible jail sentences.

Personal Watercraft - Special laws apply including wearing a life jacket and operating at slow no wake speeds at certain distances from other watercraft, swimmers and other objects in the water. Operator age restrictions also apply. Contact the Boating Guide for more information. A DNR safety video is available free of charge.