Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
500 Lafayette Rd  
St. Paul, MN 55155  

October 23, 2020

Dear Fishing Tournament Permit Holder:

The enclosed permit to hold a fishing tournament during the open water season of 2021 comes with additional responsibilities due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please note that the conditions and guidelines laid out below are subject to change. We encourage you to remain flexible and look for updates from me if anything changes.

Governor Walz’s Executive Order 20-74 (EO 20-74) remains in effect. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Outdoor Recreation Guidelines were most recently updated on July 27, 2020, to incorporate new guidelines for outdoor recreational facilities and venues. The latest Outdoor Recreation Guidelines are available on DNR’s website at https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/covid-19.html.

Per the Outdoor Recreation Guidelines, fishing tournaments may be held if they are modified as described below:

- The event organizer develops an event-specific COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The Plan must be communicated to all participants and available to the DNR upon request.
- Tournament participants and spectators do not gather in groups larger than 25 unless held at an Outdoor Venue where 1) admission and occupancy can be relatively controlled and are somewhat predictable, or 2) that involves individually allocated, reserved, or assigned seats or similar accommodation.
  - Any component of the event held at an Outdoor Venue (e.g. rules meetings or awards ceremonies) must follow the Guidance for Recreational Entertainment Venues or Guidance for Seated Entertainment and Meeting Venues, respectively, including the capacity limitations.
- In person weigh-ins are allowed, provided the format is modified to avoid outdoor gatherings of more than 25 individuals (unless held at an Outdoor Venue), inclusive of participants, officials, and spectators. Some examples of modified formats include holding the weigh-in on the water, where teams verify each other’s weights, or breaking the field into groups by staggering or scheduling weigh-in times.
- If necessary to observe gathering size limitations and maintain social distancing, the tournament must use either a staggered start or multiple points of departure and return so that the group size limit is not exceeded.
- Participants and spectators must maintain social distancing, not exceed gathering size limits, and follow Minnesota’s face covering requirements.
We are still encouraging tournaments to modify their tournament activities to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread. Suggestions include:

- Hold rules meetings and award ceremonies online.
- Avoid a weigh-in altogether: adopt a catch-measure-release format.

Thank you for your patience and understanding – know that these Outdoor Recreation Guidelines are meant to keep Minnesotans healthy and safe. If you have further questions related to DNR’s COVID-19 response as it relates to your tournament, feel free to contact me. If you have any other questions about your tournament permit, please contact your Regional Fisheries Office.

Finally, be sure to check for the most up to date information on Minnesota’s response to COVID-19 by visiting https://mn.gov/covid19/ and https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/covid-19.html.

Sincerely,

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