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## Waterway and Wetland Permits

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# Proposed Updates to Rules for Piers, Boat Shelters and Swimming Rafts

For more than 70 years, some piers have been required to get a state review to assure they don't present a safety hazard, harm critical fish habitat, or interfere with recreation. DNR is now updating pier rules to reflect changes under a 2004 law. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) adopted revisions to NR 326, Wisconsin Administrative Code, on December 7, 2005. The rule revisions are awaiting legislative review and are expected to go into effect in Spring 2006.

- [Factsheet on Rule Revisions](#) (PDF, 124KB)
- [Complete NR 326 adopted by NRB](#) (PDF, 152KB)
- [Key milestones in Wisconsin's regulation of piers](#) (PDF, 15KB)

As background, a recent [study of Wisconsin piers](#) (PDF, 144KB) looked at the number and sizes of piers on Wisconsin waters.

- 85% are under 6 feet wide, extend to the three foot water depth or the depth needed to moor a specific boat, and have mooring space for boats in proportion to shoreline ownership.
- 99% would need no change under the adopted rule revisions.
- Less than 1% have very large desks at end, more than 200 square feet.

A [print-ready gallery](#) of photographs shows which piers do not need a permit and those that do, and the critical shallow-water habitat the rules aim to protect.

Studies in Wisconsin and elsewhere have shown that [all piers](#), and the [boats associated with them](#), have impacts, but that wide piers and decks are particularly damaging. Piers cause shading, which retards growth of the aquatic plants critical for fish habitat, which in

Piers, Docks, Wharves  
Pilings  
Ponds  
Shoreline Erosion Control-  
Lakes  
Streambank Erosion  
Control  
Stream Realignment  
Swimming Rafts  
Utility Waterway Crossing  
Water Ski Platforms  
Wetlands

turn affects the macroinvertebrates and fish populations. Boats docked at the piers enlarge the area being shaded, and boat traffic can chop up and uproot aquatic plants, impact water clarity, and exacerbate shoreline erosion.

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For more information about the procedures for Exemptions, General Permits and Individual Permits, see [Permit Process Today](#).

For more information about proposed revisions to NR 326, contact [Liesa Lehmann](#), DNR Waterway Policy Coordinator, (608) 266-2997.

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