



Snohomish County
Planning and Development
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ONLINE INFORMATION

www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190



This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Residential Docks on Lakes

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WWW.SNOCO.ORG

Keyword: Assistance Bulletins

Most of the lakes within Snohomish County are designated as *Shorelines of the State* and are therefore regulated under the Snohomish County Shoreline Master Program section SCC 30.67.517. If you are on a lake that is smaller than 20 acres in size, then the permit requirements for your dock are regulated under the zoning code under SCC 30.22.130 (3).

Q: Do I need a building permit to repair a dock?

A: Replacing decking or planks does not require a building permit; however, replacement of structural support members does require a building permit.

***Please note:** While a building permit may not be required for dock repair, please be aware that a flood hazard permit, and state and federal permits and approvals may also be required as discussed below.

Q: Do I need a permit to build a dock?

A: Yes. However, there are a few exceptions to the permit requirement, such as recreational floats and floating docks, for example, so check with PDS staff before you submit your application if you have questions.

Q: Do I need a building permit if I'm only building an anchored swimming float or raft?

A: Not usually. A single swimming float/raft and floating docks that are secured in place by an anchoring device do not require a building permit. Swim floats/rafts are limited to 100 square feet of surface area and must be designed to allow for a minimum of 40 percent open spacing through the deck surface. If the float or floating dock exceeds the valuation limits listed below (exempt valuation), or materially interferes with the normal public use of the water or shoreline, a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit will be required.

Q: How do I apply for a building permit and what are the submittal requirements?

A: A dock building permit shall be submitted at MyBuildingPermit.com and submitted documents must include the following:

- Online application form.
- A site/plot plan (an accurate and detailed map of your property which shows the location of existing buildings and the proposed work). It must contain the name of the property owner, north arrow, property lines, easements, dimensions and the location of the proposed dock. A scale of the map is required.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

...submittal requirements (continued):

- Construction drawings containing a framing plan, materials list and a cross section.
- SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) checklist (if the dock is new or expanded)
- If docks exist on abutting properties, an additional site plan shall be submitted showing all existing docks, clearly depicting their length.

Q: What other permits are required?

A: Docks typically require a flood hazard zone permit (Required for any development occurring within a flood hazard area). Docks require a Hydraulic Project Approval from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Also a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) must be submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers for any dock that requires fill below the water (pile driving is not considered fill).

Q: When do I need a “Shoreline Substantial Development Permit?”

A: You must apply for a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit with Snohomish County (in addition to the building permit and flood hazard permit) if you are proposing to construct a new dock, construct an addition to a dock, or replace an existing dock and the total value of the dock exceeds the following value:

- \$11,200 fair market value as determined by the county on a lake governed by the Snohomish County Shoreline Management Program for new or expanded docks (lakes over 20 acres in size).
- \$22,500 fair market value as determined by the county on a lake governed by the Snohomish County Shoreline Management Program for docks replacing existing docks that are the same size or smaller than the replaced dock.

Q: When do I need a “Shoreline Substantial Development Exemption Letter?”

A: If your proposed dock is exempt from a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit as discussed in the previous question and your dock includes fill below the water (driven piles and pre-cast concrete are not considered fill), then you will need to request a shoreline exemption letter from Snohomish County and pay current shoreline exemption processing fee.

Q: What specific regulations apply to new docks on lakes in the shoreline jurisdiction?

A:

LENGTH RESTRICTION

The **maximum length** of any pier or dock shall be the average length of the docks on abutting properties, the point where the water depth is eight feet below the elevation of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) or 80 feet when no docks exist on abutting properties, whichever is reached first. (See SCC 30.67.517)

WIDTH RESTRICTIONS

The **maximum width** of each pier or dock shall be six feet, or up to eight feet wide on joint use or shared docks.

The **maximum width** for piers and docks shall be four feet for the first thirty feet from the OHWM of **any lake that contains salmonids**.

SETBACKS

Unless shared by adjacent property owners, **covered private docks** shall be at least **three feet from any side lot line or extension thereof**.

No setback from adjacent properties is required for **uncovered private docks** or for private docks shared by adjacent property owners

No portion of a float is allowed to be placed more than 45 feet waterward of the OHWM and shall not have more than 100 square feet of surface area. Retrieval lines shall not float at or near the surface of the water.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

The decking of all docks, piers or floats shall be designed with a minimum of 40 percent open spacing through grated decks, space between decking, light prisms, or other means.

Any part of a dock, pier or float that comes in direct contact with the water shall not be treated or coated with toxic materials. Only untreated wood, precast concrete, plastic, steel, or treated wood that meets or exceeds the standards outlined in the latest edition of the [Western Wood Preservers Institute Best Management Practices](#) for the Use of Treated Wood in the Aquatic and Sensitive Areas shall be used.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions?

A: You may contact us if you have any questions via:

Online: [Ask A Permit Tech](#)

Telephone: 425-388-3311

Visit us at: 2nd Floor, Administration East, Robert J. Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue, Everett