

# Water Access: Boat Ramps

## Private ramps: site and construction criteria

- The site can support a ramp without pilings, dredging, or other special site preparations.
- The ramp will be constructed of gravel, natural rock, steel matting, or other durable inorganic material not exceeding 7 inches in thickness.
- The ramp will be no more than 12 feet wide along shore and 10 feet waterward of the shoreline or into a water depth of 4 feet, whichever is less.
- Excavation of no more than 5 cubic yards (to create a suitable slope and launching area) and placement of no more than 5 cubic yards of crushed rock, gravel, clean sand, or small stone are allowed to provide a stable base or maintain use of the ramp.
- The site is not a federally designated wild and scenic river.

## Public ramps: site and construction criteria

- The requirements are the same as above, except the ramp can be up to 36 feet wide and 30 feet waterward of the shoreline or into a water depth of 4 feet, whichever is less.
- No more than 200 cubic yards of excavation is allowed, and placement of no more than 80 cubic yards of crushed rock, gravel, clean sand, or small stone is allowed to provide a stable base or maintain use of the ramp.

If the proposed ramp **cannot** meet **all** of the preceding criteria, a permit from the DNR is required. Contact your DNR Area Hydrologist for assistance.



(above) Using the motor to push a boat onto a trailer (known as power loading) damages boat ramp sites. The spinning propeller can erode sediment beyond the edge of the ramp surface, creating a hole just past the ramp, and the sediment can create a mound beyond the hole. Trailer wheels might suddenly drop into the hole, and boats might run aground against the mound. (Illustration from Design Handbook for Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities, Second Edition, 2006, by States Organization for Boating Access)



Boat ramp construction requires erosion-control measures, such as a floating silt fence (pictured above) to limit the spread of sediment stirred up by construction. The removal or destruction of aquatic plants to install a boat ramp is an activity regulated by the DNR. If your plans affect aquatic vegetation, please contact a regional DNR Fisheries office because a permit may be required under the Aquatic Plant Management Program.

## Construction specifications

Construction materials allowable for the installation of ramps include poured concrete, natural rock, precast concrete, gravel, and steel matting. All may require periodic maintenance from vehicle use and lake ice expanding and pushing against the ramp in winter.

The slope of the boat ramp should be steep enough to launch the boat without the vehicle entering the water. Generally, ramp slopes from 15 percent (1.5 feet of drop over a 10-foot length) to 12 percent ensure that boaters will have little trouble launching or pulling their boats from the water. If the slope is steeper than 15 percent, retrieving a boat and trailer is difficult. A slope of less than 12 percent will also cause a problem; the flatter the slope, the farther a vehicle must back into the water so that a boat can float free of its trailer.

## DNR Contact Information



DNR Ecological and Water Resources website and a listing of Area Hydrologists: <http://mndnr.gov/waters>

DNR Ecological and Water Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 32  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 259-5100

Information is available on the Trails and Waterways web site: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/contact/trails\\_waterways.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/contact/trails_waterways.html). Questions may also be directed to (651) 295-5666

## DNR Information Center

*This information is available in an alternative format on request.*

Twin Cities: (651) 296-6157  
Minnesota toll free: 1-888-646-6367  
Telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD): (651) 296-5484  
TDD toll free: 1-800-657-3929

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