

SECTION .1200 - GENERAL PERMIT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PIERS AND DOCKING FACILITIES: IN ESTUARINE AND PUBLIC TRUST WATERS AND OCEAN HAZARD AREAS

15A NCAC 07H .1201 PURPOSE

A permit under this Section shall allow the construction of piers and docking facilities, including pile supported or floating, in the Estuarine and Public Trust Waters AECs and construction of piers and docks within Coastal Wetland AECs according to the authority provided in Subchapter 07J .1100 and according to the rules in this Section. This permit shall not apply to oceanfront shorelines or to waters and shorelines adjacent to the Ocean Hazard AEC with the exception of those shorelines that feature characteristics of the Estuarine Shoreline AEC. Such features include the presence of wetland vegetation, lower wave energy, and lower erosion rates than the adjacent Ocean Erodible Area.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(a); 113A-107(b); 113A-113(b); 113A-118.1; 113A-124; Eff. March 1, 1984; Amended Eff. July 1, 2009; April 1, 2003; Readopted Eff. December 1, 2021.

15A NCAC 07H .1202 APPROVAL PROCEDURES

(a) An applicant for a General Permit under this Subchapter shall contact the Division of Coastal Management and request approval for development.

(b) The applicant shall provide:

- (1) the site location, dimensions of the project area and name, and his or her address; and
- (2) confirmation that a written statement has been obtained signed by the adjacent riparian property owners indicating that they have no objections to the proposed work; or
- (3) confirmation that the adjacent riparian property owners have been notified by certified mail of the proposed work. The notice shall instruct adjacent property owners to provide any comments on the proposed development in writing for consideration by permitting officials to the Division of Coastal Management within 10 days of receipt of the notice and indicate that no response will be interpreted as no objection. Division staff shall review all comments and determine, based on their relevance to the potential impacts of the proposed project, if the proposed project can be approved by a General Permit. If Division staff finds that the comments are worthy of more in-depth review, the Division shall notify the applicant that he or she must submit an application for a major development permit.

(c) No work shall begin until an on-site meeting is held with the applicant and a Division of Coastal Management representative to review the proposed development. A permit to proceed with the proposed development shall be issued if the Division representative finds that the application meets all the requirements of this Subchapter. Construction shall be completed within 120 days of the issuance of the general permit or the authorization shall expire and it shall be necessary to re-examine the proposed development to determine if the general permit may be reissued.

(d) Any modification or addition to the permitted project shall require prior approval from the Division of Coastal Management.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(a); 113A-107(b); 113A-113(b); 113A-118.1; 113A-124; Eff. March 1, 1984; Amended Eff. October 1, 2007; August 1, 1998; January 1, 1990; Readopted Eff. December 1, 2021.

15A NCAC 07H .1203 PERMIT FEE

The applicant shall pay a permit fee of four hundred dollars (\$400.00) by check or money order payable to the Department of Environmental Quality.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107; 113A-118.1; 113A-119; 113A-119.1; 113A-124; 113-229; Eff. March 1, 1984; Amended Eff. September 1, 2006; August 1, 2000; March 1, 1991; Readopted Eff. December 1, 2021; Amended Eff. January 1, 2024.

15A NCAC 07H .1204 GENERAL CONDITIONS

(a) Piers and docking facilities authorized by the general permit set forth in this Section shall be for the exclusive use of the land owner or occupant and shall not be leased, rented, or used for any commercial purpose. Piers and docking facilities shall provide docking space for no more than two boats. Docking facilities providing docking space for more than two boats shall be reviewed through the major permitting process due to their greater potential for adverse impacts and, therefore, are not authorized by this general permit, excluding the exceptions described in Rule .1205 of this Section.

- (b) Individuals shall allow representatives of the Department of Environmental Quality to make inspections at any time in order to ensure that the activity being performed under the authority of the general permit set forth in this Section is in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed herein.
- (c) There shall be no interference with navigation or use of the waters by the public through the existence of piers and docking facilities.
- (d) The permit set forth in this Section shall not be applicable to proposed construction where the Department determines that the proposed activity will endanger adjoining properties or significantly affect historic, cultural, scenic, conservation or recreation values, identified in G.S. 113A-102 and G.S. 113A-113(b)(4).
- (e) The permit set forth in this Section does not eliminate the need to obtain any other required State, local, or federal authorization.
- (f) Development carried out under the permit set forth in this Section shall be consistent with all State, federal, local requirements, and local land use plans current at the time of authorization.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(a); 113A-107(b); 113A-113(b); 113A-118.1; 113A-124; Eff. March 1, 1984; Amended Eff. May 1, 1990; RRC Objection due to ambiguity Eff. May 19, 1994; Amended Eff. August 1, 2014; July 1, 2009; August 1, 1998; July 1, 1994; Readopted Eff. December 1, 2021.

15A NCAC 07H .1205 SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- (a) Piers and docking facilities may extend or be located up to a maximum of 400 feet waterward from the normal high water line or the normal water level, whichever is applicable.
- (b) Piers and docking facilities shall not extend beyond the established pier length along the same shoreline for similar use. This restriction shall not apply to piers and docking facilities 100 feet or less in length unless necessary to avoid interference with navigation or other uses of the waters by the public such as blocking established navigation routes or interfering with access to adjoining properties as determined by the Division of Coastal Management. The length of piers and docking facilities shall be measured from the waterward edge of any wetlands that border the water body.
- (c) Piers and docking facilities longer than 200 feet shall be permitted only if the proposed length gives access to deeper water at a rate of at least one foot at each 100 foot increment of pier length longer than 200 feet, or if the additional length is necessary to span some obstruction to navigation. Measurements to determine pier and docking facility lengths shall be made from the waterward edge of any coastal wetland vegetation that borders the water body.
- (d) Piers shall be no wider than six feet and shall be elevated at least three feet above any coastal wetland substrate as measured from the bottom of the decking.
- (e) The total square footage of shaded impact for docks and mooring facilities (excluding the pier) allowed shall be 8 square feet per linear foot of shoreline with a maximum of 800 square feet. In calculating the shaded impact, uncovered open water slips shall not be counted in the total.
- (f) The maximum size of any individual component of the docking facility authorized by this general permit shall not exceed 400 square feet.
- (g) Docking facilities shall not be constructed in a designated Primary Nursery Area with less than two feet of water at normal low water level or normal water level under the general permit set forth in this Section without prior approval from the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Wildlife Resources Commission.
- (h) Piers and docking facilities located over shellfish beds or submerged aquatic vegetation as defined by the Marine Fisheries Commission may be constructed without prior consultation from the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Wildlife Resources Commission if the following two conditions are met:
 - (1) Water depth at the docking facility location is equal to or greater than two feet of water at normal low water level or normal water level; and
 - (2) The pier and docking facility is located to minimize the area of submerged aquatic vegetation or shellfish beds under the structure as determined by the Division of Coastal Management.
- (i) Floating piers and floating docking facilities located in Primary Nursery Areas, over shellfish beds, or over submerged aquatic vegetation shall be allowed if the water depth between the bottom of the proposed structure and the substrate is at least 18 inches at normal low water level or normal water level.
- (j) Docking facilities shall have no more than six feet of any horizontal dimension extending over coastal wetlands and shall be elevated at least three feet above any coastal wetland substrate as measured from the bottom of the decking.
- (k) The width requirements established in Paragraph (d) of this Rule shall not apply to pier structures in existence on or before July 1, 2001 when structural modifications are needed to prevent or minimize storm damage. In these cases, pilings and cross bracing may be used to provide structural support as long as they do not extend more than two feet on either side of the principal structure. These modifications shall not be used to expand the floor decking of platforms and piers.
- (l) Boathouses shall not exceed a combined total of 400 square feet and shall have sides extending no further than one-half the height of the walls as measured in a downward direction from the top wall plate or header to the Normal Water Level or Normal High Water and only covering the top half of the walls. Measurements of square footage shall be taken of the greatest exterior dimensions. Boathouses shall not be allowed on lots with less than 75 linear feet of shoreline.

Structural boat covers, utilizing frame-supported fabric covering, can be permitted on properties with less than 75 linear feet of shoreline when using screened fabric for side walls.

(m) The area enclosed by a boat lift shall not exceed 400 square feet.

(n) Piers and docking facilities shall be single story. They may be roofed but shall not allow second story use.

(o) Pier and docking facility alignments along federally maintained channels shall also meet Corps of Engineers regulations for construction pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403).

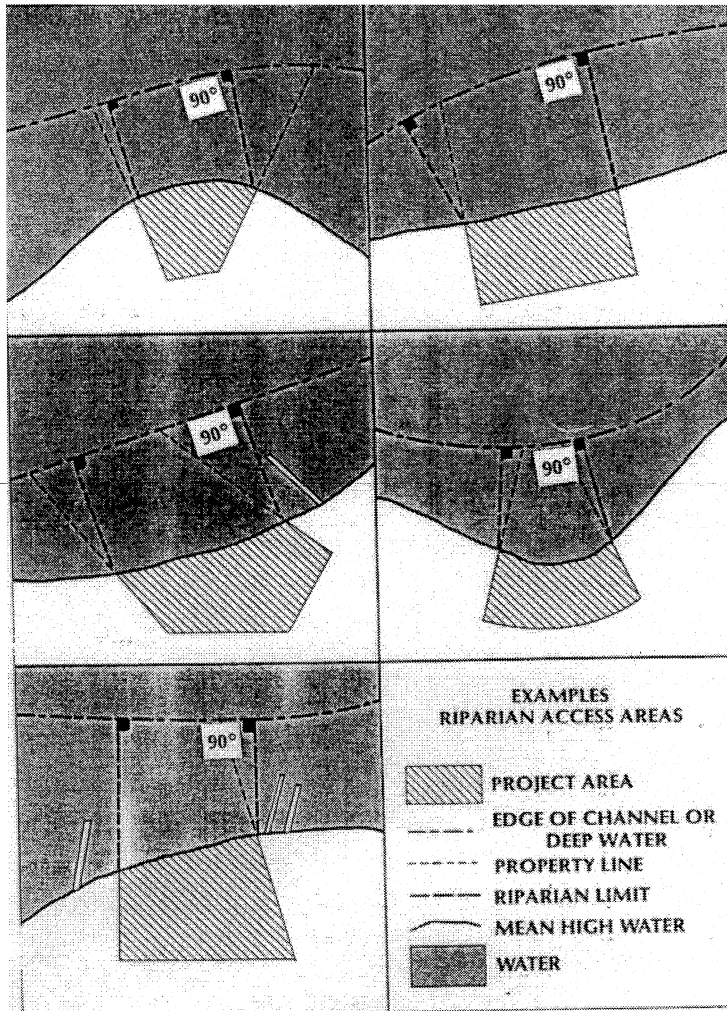
(p) Piers and docking facilities shall in no case extend more than 1/4 the width of a natural water body, human-made canal, or basin. Measurements to determine widths of the water body, human-made canals, or basins shall be made from the waterward edge of any coastal wetland vegetation which borders the water body. The 1/4 length limitation shall not apply when the proposed pier and docking facility is located between longer structures within 200 feet of the applicant's property. However, the proposed pier and docking facility shall not be longer than the pier head line established by the adjacent piers and docking facilities or longer than 1/3 the width of the water body.

(q) Piers and docking facilities shall not interfere with the access to any riparian property, and shall have a minimum setback of 15 feet between any part of the pier and docking facility and the adjacent property lines extended into the water at the points that they intersect the shoreline. The minimum setbacks provided in this Paragraph may be waived by the written agreement of the adjacent riparian owner(s), or when two adjoining riparian owners are co-applicants. Should the adjacent property be sold before construction of the pier commences, the applicant shall obtain a written agreement with the new owner waiving the minimum setback and submit it to the Division of Coastal Management prior to initiating any development of the pier or docking facility. The line of division of areas of riparian access shall be established by drawing a line along the channel or deep water in front of the property, then drawing a line perpendicular to the line of the channel so that it intersects with the shore at the point the upland property line meets the water's edge. Application of this Rule may be aided by reference to the diagram in Paragraph (t) of this Rule illustrating the Rule as applied to various shoreline configurations. Copies of the diagram may be obtained from the Division of Coastal Management website at <http://www.nccoastalmanagement.net>. When shoreline configuration is such that a perpendicular alignment cannot be achieved, the pier or docking facility shall be aligned to meet the intent of this Rule to the maximum extent practicable.

(r) Piers and docking facilities shall provide docking space for no more than two boats, as defined in 15A NCAC 07M .0602(a), except when stored on a platform that has already been accounted for within the shading impacts condition of this general permit. Boats stored on floating or fixed platforms shall not count as docking spaces.

(s) Applicants for authorization to construct a pier or docking facility shall provide notice of the permit application to the owner of any part of a shellfish franchise or lease over which the proposed pier or docking facility would extend. The applicant shall allow the lease holder the opportunity to mark a navigation route from the pier to the edge of the lease.

(t) The diagram shown below illustrates various shoreline configurations:



(u) Shared piers or docking facilities shall be allowed, provided that in addition to complying with Paragraphs (a) through (t) of this Rule the following shall also apply:

- (1) The shared pier or docking facility shall be confined to two adjacent riparian property owners and the landward point of origination of the structure shall overlap the shared property line;
- (2) Shared piers and docking facilities shall be designed to provide docking space for no more than four boats;
- (3) The total square footage of shaded impact for docks and mooring facilities shall be calculated using Paragraph (e) of this Rule and in addition shall allow for combined shoreline of both properties;
- (4) The property owners of the shared pier shall not be required to obtain a 15-foot waiver from each other as described in Paragraph (q) of this Rule as it applies to the shared riparian line for any work associated with the shared pier, provided that the title owners of both properties have executed a shared pier agreement that has become a part of the permit file; and
- (5) The construction of a second access pier or docking facility not associated with the shared pier shall not be authorized under the general permit set forth in this Section.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(a); 113A-107(b); 113A-113(b); 113A-118.1; 113A-124; Eff. March 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. December 1, 1991; May 1, 1990; March 1, 1990;
RRC Objection due to ambiguity Eff. March 18, 1993;
Amended Eff. August 1, 1998; April 23, 1993;
Temporary Amendment Eff. December 20, 2001;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2014; July 1, 2009; April 1, 2003;
Readopted Eff. December 1, 2021;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2022.*