

**6212.2525 PERMITTED FISHING CONTESTS.**

Subpart 1. **Limitation on number of boats.** Contest participation is limited to not more than one boat for each ten acres of contest water.

Subp. 2. **Equipment requirements.** The following boat live-well and fish-holding equipment requirements are mandatory for all live-release contests to minimize negative impacts to fish:

- A. must have functional water pump or circulation system; and
- B. must be sufficiently sized to handle the anticipated number of fish allowed in the event.

Subp. 3. **Contest denials.** The commissioner shall not issue fishing contest permits for:

- A. tagging or marking fish for special contest rewards;
- B. contests that promote or allow fizzing (the act of inserting a needle into a fish's gas bladder);
- C. contests where boat take-off procedures result in unsafe boating;
- D. contests on waters where the commissioner determines the activity may compromise the fish management or research data being collected; or
- E. contests on opening days, holidays, and other high-use periods that the commissioner determines result in unacceptable safety risks.

Subp. 4. **Permit conditions.**

A. When necessary to protect fish and fish habitat, restrict activities during high-use periods, restrict activities that affect research or management work, restrict the number of boats, ensure the safety of contest participants, or decontaminate boats participating in fishing contests on infested waters, one or more of the following conditions or restrictions shall be specified in the permit:

- (1) seasonal and daily restrictions;
- (2) geographical restrictions;
- (3) fish holding equipment requirements;
- (4) daily and possession limits;
- (5) contest length;
- (6) treatment, decontamination, and management practices, including those for transport and disposal of infested waters, to prevent the transport of pathogens and invasive species;
- (7) use of live bait; or
- (8) handling and transport of fish.

B. The commissioner shall consider the following criteria when determining conditions to be included in the permit:

- (1) whether the contest activity will advance knowledge, understanding, interpretation, or management of a fish species, fish community, or water body;
- (2) impacts on other public uses, research efforts, educational events, or management activities;
- (3) impacts to spawning fish or areas, rice beds, critical habitat, or the fish community;
- (4) whether the contest activity is detrimental or helps achieve management objectives for the specific water body;
- (5) whether water temperature, water quality conditions, or pathogens would lead to undue mortality of released fish;
- (6) whether contest activities during high-use periods are anticipated to cause unacceptable safety risks;
- (7) whether contest activities during high-use periods are anticipated to cause user conflicts;
- (8) whether the water body is infested and what invasive species are present;
- (9) the type of tournament being conducted on an infested water body; or
- (10) whether the applicants are coming from an area known to be infested with invasive species.

**Subp. 5. Restrictions on off-site weigh-ins.** The commissioner shall not issue fishing contest permits to conduct an off-site weigh-in if the contest organizer cannot prevent the transport of invasive species or pathogens from activities associated with the contest. To prevent the transport of invasive species or pathogens associated with conducting the contest, the permit shall require, at a minimum, draining and refilling water holding equipment with groundwater or treated water, as specified by the commissioner:

- A. at the access site before leaving to go to another water body;
- B. at the access site before going to the weigh-in location; and
- C. at the weigh-in location.

**Subp. 6. Restrictions on live release weigh-ins.**

A. Except for weigh-ins when fish are immediately released, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.015, subdivision 26c, at the location where caught, the commissioner shall not issue fishing contest permits for live release weigh-ins:

- (1) when water temperature, water quality conditions, or pathogens may lead to undue mortality of released fish;
- (2) for fishing contests involving muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*), sturgeon (Acipenseridae family), or trout and salmon (Salmonidae family); or

(3) for fishing contests involving walleye, sauger, and their hybrids (*Sander* genus within the Percidae family) from:

(a) Memorial Day to Labor Day for all inland and border waters located in and south of Traverse, Grant, Douglas, Todd, Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, and Pine Counties, except Lake Mille Lacs; and

(b) from June 14 to Labor Day for all other inland and border waters, including Lake Mille Lacs.

B. The commissioner shall not issue fishing contest permits to release fish alive after an off-site weigh-in:

(1) when fish will be held more than 2-1/2 hours from the time they leave the contest waters until they are returned to contest waters;

(2) when 100 or more fish will be weighed-in for the contest;

(3) for fishing contests involving northern pike (*Esox lucius*); or

(4) for fishing contests involving bass (*Micropterus* genus within the Centrarchidae family) during July and August.

C. The commissioner must exempt fishing contests on the Canadian border waters and in Chisago County from the requirements described in item B, subitems (2) and (4), if the contest was operating before January 1, 2008, and the contest is:

(1) held in consecutive years;

(2) not moved to a new location or water body;

(3) not conducted with more than 65 participating boats or 130 participating anglers;  
and

(4) consistent with the biological health of the fishery.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 84.027; 84.0895; 97A.045; 97C.025; 97C.081; 97C.395*

**History:** *37 SR 1207; 49 SR 45*

**Published Electronically:** *August 29, 2024*