



Fishing Tournament and Special Events Regulations



Who needs a fishing tournament permit?

A fishing tournament is any organized competitive angling event involving 20 or more boats or, if boats are not involved, 50 or more people, conducted on the public waters of this state, for the purpose of awarding prizes or for personal gain or promotional consideration. Junior fishing clinics or achievement contests for youths under age 17 are not considered to be fishing tournaments regardless of the number of participants.

Why are permits required for fishing tournaments?

The application and review process for a permit allows Game, Fish and Parks to determine that the event being planned: 1) is allowable within the statutes, rules and policies which apply; 2) will not harm the resources involved; 3) is compatible with the facilities available; 4) does not conflict with other, previously scheduled events; 5) does or does not carry a higher than usual risk of injury to participants or others and greater liability for event organizers and employees of the state.

Are there times or dates when fishing tournaments are not permitted?

Fishing tournaments are not permitted from 8 a.m. on Friday to 8 p.m. on Sunday of Free Fishing and State Parks Open House Weekend (usually the weekend preceding Memorial Day week-end) or on Memorial Day, July Fourth, Labor Day, or on associated weekends when those holidays fall on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

Are special conditions considered?

Tournaments may be held at times and places which require that special conditions be imposed. These provisions may be included after the sponsor or organizer has applied for the permit through discussion with a department representative. Special provisions **may** include but not limited to:

- Designating a safe start area or establishing a no-wake zone.
- Requiring weigh-in areas away from high traffic areas
- Limitations for catch and release tournaments.
- Requiring reduced limits for tournaments.
- Prohibiting catch and release tournaments where fish are taken into possession and not immediately released for walleye and all salmon tournaments June 1st through September 15th.
- Requiring special parking areas for tournament anglers.
- Requiring specific hours for events involving boats.
- Other conditions as imposed by local GFP official.

How long before my planned event must I apply?

Applications will be accepted no earlier than November 1st of the year preceding the planned tournament or event, but no later than 30 days prior to the planned tournament or 15 days before the planned special event.

Tournament and Special Event permit requests are processed as they are received. There is always the possibility that the date(s) and public access area you request may have already been permitted to another tournament or event.

Where can I get an application?

From any Game, Fish & Parks Department office, conservation officer, park manager, park ranger or online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/licenses/other-permits/default.aspx>

What about liability insurance and waivers of liability?

If the event you are planning involves 200 or more participants or 100 or more boats, or the event is determined to involve a high risk of injury to participants or others, liability insurance and waivers of liability signed by each participant will be required. See the fishing tournament application for more details.

Where do I send my completed application?

Applications must be reviewed and approved by the conservation officer responsible for the location where your tournament is to be held. If the event is to be held at a state park or state recreation area, the park manager at that location must also review and approve the application. Taking or mailing the completed application directly to the responsible conservation officer or park manager will speed up the process greatly. If you do not know the name or address of the appropriate conservation officer or park manager, simply mail your application to:

Special Events/Tournaments

Attn: Dana Ertz
523 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
Or Fax to: 605-773-6245

Once the fishing tournament or special event is approved, copies of the permit will be mailed to the tournament organizer, the conservation officer, the park manager if applicable, The Division of Wildlife regional office, and the Division of Parks and Recreation assistant director of operations, if applicable. For further information, call (605)773-5913.

Resource considerations when conducting your tournament.

Fishing tournaments may generate concerns of the non-tournament public. This requires a positive approach by the tournament organizers and anglers. While a single tournament may not have a significant impact on fish population, collectively they are part of the total angling impact sustained by a fish population. Catching and releasing large numbers of fish, hauling fish in a livewell for several hours or improper handling may result in unnecessary fish mortality.

Public perception of fishing tournaments is important to consider and there are several actions which participants may take to improve those perceptions. Tournament sponsors should incorporate appropriate catch and release format, proper handling techniques, and reduced daily creel limits as ways to minimize criticism while maintaining ethical tournament practices. One or more of these practices may go a long way in generating positive attitudes toward tournaments.

Aquatic Invasive Species

South Dakota waters are threatened by several Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) that may be spread unknowingly by anglers and boaters.

Regulations require the following:

- Plugs for boat hulls, livewells, and baitwells must be opened or removed when watercraft are not on the water.
- Fish and aquatic bait transported in other containers with lake or stream water must be replaced with domestic water.
- Any accumulated vegetation must be removed from boats and trailers.
- Bait containers may not be dumped into any waters

In addition, anglers may not import bait fish and must comply with bait regulations and ensure that the species is legal for use as bait.

Potential species that may be encountered are:

Zebra/Quagga Mussels	Eurasian Watermilfoil
Asian Carp	Curly Pondweed
Rusty Crayfish	European Rudd