

**Section 810.90 Fishing Tournament Permit**

- a) A Fishing Tournament Permit from the Department is required for any fishing tournament event, which includes Hook and Line Fishing Tournaments and Bowfishing Tournaments, that is held in any of the waters listed in Section 810.45 or Section 810.15(d) and in any public owned or Department-managed lake, river or stream in Illinois.
- b) The Fishing Tournament Permit serves as the IDNR Site Activity Permit (17 Ill. Adm. Code 110.4).
- c) Definitions
  - 1) "Fishing Derby" – An organized event conducted for children under the age of 16 who are attending primary school, senior citizens (65 years old and older), sport fishermen with disabilities, or other school-sanctioned groups when the principal purpose is education or enjoyment, rather than competition among sport fishermen. Tournament Permits are not required for a fishing derby.
  - 2) "Fishing Tournament" – An organized event, other than a fishing derby. An event will be considered a fishing tournament when the following criteria are present:
    - A) the event is sponsored or promoted by an individual or organization;
    - B) participants compete for trophies, cash, prizes, citation or other recognition for participation in the event;
    - C) the event is conducted during a specified time period; and
    - D) twenty or more individuals participate in the event or an exemption to Site-Specific or Statewide Regulations is requested.

- d) The Department shall require the director or organizer of a fishing tournament that is occurring at or on a Department site to:
- 1) agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Department, its officers, employees and agent for any damage to property and persons as a result of the willful and/or negligent acts of the group and/or its members and/or those in attendance. The Department will provide the Release, Waiver and Indemnification form for the group to sign and submit to the Site Superintendent; and
  - 2) the tournament director or organizer shall:
    - A) provide proof of liability insurance of \$1,000,000; or
    - B) require each individual who participates in the event to sign a liability waiver that was attached to the issued permit and turned back in to the Department site office prior to the event.
- e) A copy of the Fishing Tournament Permit must be in the possession of the director or organizer at all times during the event.
- f) Special Length Limit and/or Daily Harvest Limit exemptions are allowed when requested on the Fishing Tournament Permit application, approved by the Department, and stated on the Fishing Tournament Permit.

- 1) Special Length Limit and Daily Harvest Limit exemptions to Site-Specific Regulations will only be approved for:
  - A) catch, hold for weigh-in, and release Black Bass Fishing Tournaments in Lake Michigan (Illinois Portion) for which the Special Minimum Length Limit will be 14 inches and the Daily Harvest Limit will be 3 fish daily;
  - B) youth-only catch, hold for weigh-in and release Black Bass Fishing Tournaments, for which the Special Minimum Length Limit will be 12 inches and the Daily Harvest Limit will be 5 fish per boat. Youth-only is defined as 18 years old and younger;
  - C) catch, hold for weigh-in, and release Muskie Fishing Tournaments (all waters), provided all fish are released unharmed immediately after a quick weigh-in; and
  - D) catch, hold for weigh-in, and release Black Bass Fishing Tournaments in the Mississippi River (between Illinois and Iowa) and which are permitted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, for which the special Minimum Length Limit will be 12 inches and the Daily Harvest Limit will be 5 fish per boat.
- 2) Daily Harvest Limit exemptions to Statewide Regulations will only be approved for a common release boat utilized immediately following a catch, hold for weight-in, and release tournament.
- g) The statewide Daily Harvest Limit of no more than 6 largemouth, smallmouth or spotted bass (black bass) that may be in possession is applicable while participating in a Hook and Line Fishing Tournament, except:
  - 1) as specified by Site Specific Regulations in Section 810.45;
  - 2) In streams and rivers (excluding the mainstem of the Mississippi, Ohio (including the Golconda Marina) and Wabash Rivers), the daily possession can contain no more than 3 smallmouth bass; and
  - 3) In rivers and streams and their tributaries statewide (excluding the Mississippi, Ohio ( including the Golconda Marina), Wabash, and Illinois Rivers, Calumet River, Lake Calumet Connecting Channel, Calumet Sag Channel and navigable portions of the Grand Calumet River and Little Calumet River, all smallmouth bass must be immediately released between April 1 and June 15.

- h) Requests for a Fishing Tournament Permit shall be made on applications provided by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fisheries, available on the IDNR and IFishIllinois websites.
  - 1) Applications must be fully completed with all required information and received by the Department not less than 30 days prior to the tournament date.
  - 2) Fishing Tournament Permit applications will be accepted beginning November 1 of each year for the following calendar year. Applications cannot be accepted before November 1 of the year the application is made for any fishing tournament that is to be held the following calendar year.
- i) The issuance or denial of a Fishing Tournament Permit by the Department shall be based upon the following criteria:
  - 1) The capability of the fishery resource to absorb the tournament with minimal impact to its well-being.
  - 2) The need for emergency protective procedures to protect the sport fisheries resources of the State and the general health, safety and welfare of the general public as provided for in Section 810.80.
  - 3) The criteria and evaluation required for approval of a Site Activity Permit, described in 17 Ill. Adm. Code 110.4.
- j) Appeals of denied permits must be made in writing to the Department within 10 days after receipt of the denial. Any supplemental information requested must be included in the appeal.
- k) Required provisions for holding, handling and releasing caught fish to protect fish health in catch, hold for weigh-in and release Hook and Line Fishing Tournaments:
  - 1) Tournament officials must be able to certify that all boats will be required to possess a livewell (except Muskie Fishing Tournaments) fitted with a functioning aerator and water pump.
  - 2) Individual boats and sport fishermen returning their catches of fish back to a release site must adhere to Daily Harvest Limits for the waterbody or the Special Daily harvest Limit listed in the Fishing Tournament Permit.

- 3) For catch, hold for weigh-in, and release Muskie Fishing Tournaments, all boats must have a fish cradle (made from netting) to temporarily hold the muskie in the water while an official determines the length or weight of the fish prior to release. Muskies may not be transported to a weigh-in site.
- l) Bowfishing tournaments may be held in any of the public waters open to bowfishing listed in Section 810.45 or public waters listed in Section 810.15(d). Bowfishing tournaments are subject to the following additional rules:
    - 1) All non-native species legal to harvest with bowfishing methods listed in Section 810.45 have unlimited harvest. No possession of live Asian carp is permitted.
    - 2) No exemptions will be granted for the wanton waste and fish abandonment provisions in Section 810.14.
  - m) Failure to comply with the rules of this Section is a violation of Section 20-35 of the Fish and Aquatic Life Code.
  - n) During the months of July and August, anglers competing in catch, hold for weigh-in, and release Black Bass Fishing Tournaments must be off the water between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.