

# User Guide For Dock Permits



April 2020

Alberta 

Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta  
April 29, 2020  
User Guide for Dock Permits

For more information regarding this content visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/lakeshores.aspx>

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# Revision History

Date	Division and/or Branch	Description
May 21, 2019	Policy/Operations Provincial Programs Branch	New User Guide created to align with the authorization requirements and application form.
April 29, 2020	Lands Division, Land Policy and Programs	Updated links and references.

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## 1.0 Preface

This guide outlines the requirements and process for an individual to obtain an authorization to place a temporary, seasonal dock for personal recreational use in Alberta's waterbodies.

In Alberta, the beds and shores of natural water bodies such as rivers and lakes are public lands and subject to the *Public Lands Act* and the Public Lands Administration Regulation (PLAR). This applies to Crown owned reservoirs and their full supply lands as well. The placement of mooring structures on public land therefore falls under the scope of the Act and the Regulation.

No additional approval under the *Water Act* is required provided that the use of your dock, floating platform, pier, dock or boat launch is portable and seasonal.

This guide provides direction for the following dock related activities:

- Authorization requirements for temporary, seasonal docks and boat lifts for personal recreational use by a waterfront or semi-waterfront landowners;
- Fees, if any;
- The process for making an application for a dock authorization;
- When to apply and expected time to receive an authorization;

- Use of anchors for associated mooring structures like swim rafts and buoys; and
- Treatment of permanent docks issued in the past.

The placement and the occupation of mooring structures on the beds and shores of water bodies is further guided by the policy directive “**Docks and Other Mooring Structures on Bed and Shore**”.

## 2.0 Approval Requirements for Mooring Structures

Mooring structures include seasonal or permanent docks, piers, wharves as well as associated structures placed on the bed and shore of a water body such as boat lifts and anchored swimming platforms and buoys.

The Public Lands Administration Regulation requires that any occupation of public land (including the beds and shores of a waterbody) for more than 14 days, be authorized. The placement of a dock or other structure on a lake or river bed over the summer recreational season therefore requires the user to obtain an authorization for their dock.

In the absence of a Disturbance Standard that governs this land use, a **Temporary Field Authorization** (TFA) is the interim mechanism that the department will issue to authorize temporary, seasonal docks.

**Note:** In Alberta, a dock does not require an authorization under the *Water Act* provided that it is a floating platform or a portable or seasonal pier, boat launch or dock in or adjacent to a waterbody.

## 3.0 Common Dock Standard

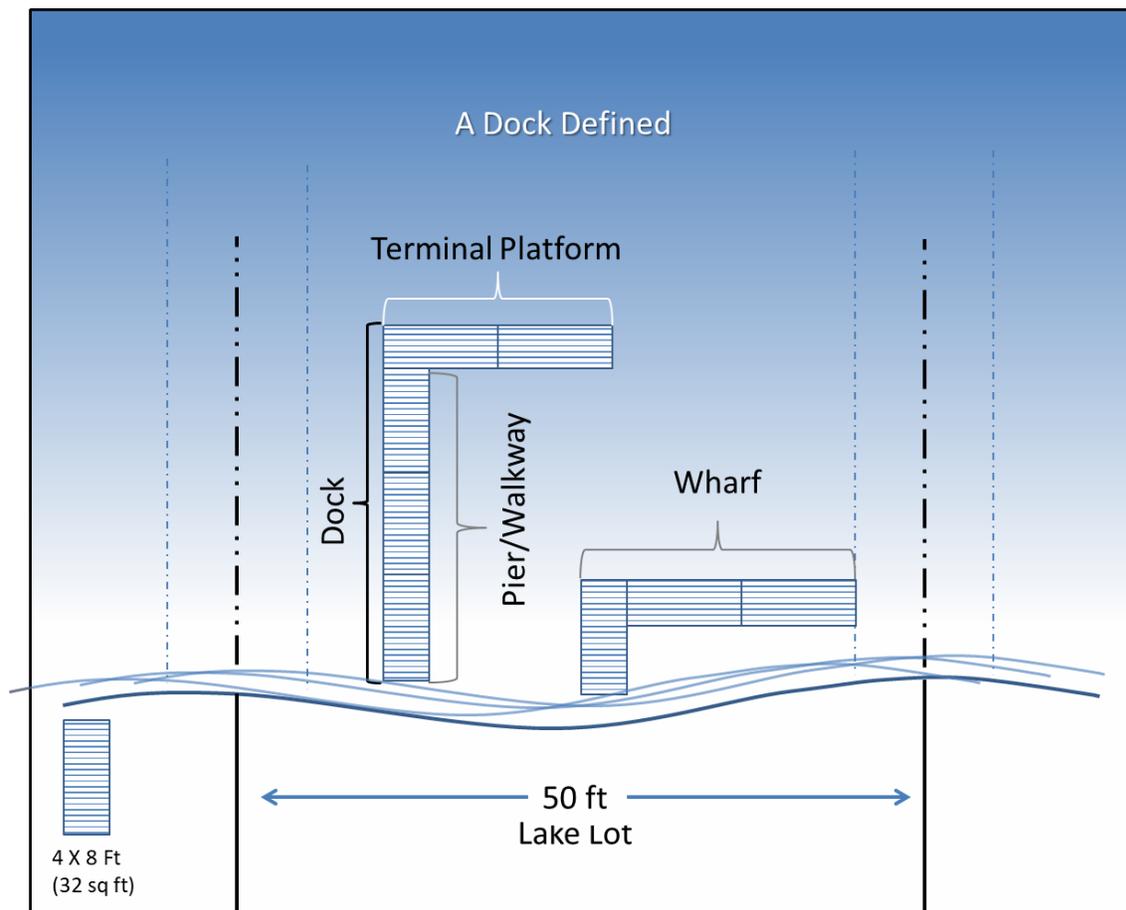
Alberta Environment and Parks has updated its policy and has established a common standard for new docks that are for temporary, seasonal use for personal recreational purposes.

### 3.1 Common Terms

The “dock” or “wharf” means the entire mooring structure and includes the walkway and terminal platform.

The “walkway” is that part of the dock made of various sections that lead from the shore to the platform area where watercraft are moored. In many cases, a dock may consist only of a walkway (a straight dock).

The “terminal platform” is that part of a dock at the end of the walkway where additional dock sections or slips are installed in various forms, often in “T” , “L” or “U” shaped configurations. In some configurations, dock sections are arranged to create multiple slips or are placed side by side to form a larger extended surface area.



## 3.2 Dock Standard

The common standard for new docks for waterfront landowners is as follows:

- No more than one temporary seasonal dock for personal recreational use may be constructed or placed within the defined mooring area;
- Docks cannot extend beyond line of navigation;
- A dock must be setback from a projected property line a minimum of 3.0 m;
- Docks are not to be located any closer than 6 m from another dock;
- The purpose of the temporary seasonal dock is to only support mooring for personal recreational use;
- The following dimensions apply for recreational seasonal docks:
  - The dock's walkway is not to exceed 1.5m in width;
  - The terminal platform in any configuration, is not to exceed 50% of the lot width;
  - The area of the terminal platform cannot exceed 24 m<sup>2</sup>;
  - A dock cannot totally enclose any portion of a Crown owned body of water;
  - If the water body is a river, a seasonal, temporary dock is not to extend out into the river more than 10% of the width of the river;
- A dock is to be maintained in a safe operating condition;
- Installation of a dock is not to involve the modification to the bed or bank of the water body;
- A dock must not unreasonably obstruct navigation or otherwise interfere with public rights in navigable waters. Reasonable space should be provided in mooring areas to allow navigation freely between moored watercraft;
- A dock must not interfere with the ability of other waterfront holders right of ingress and egress;
- A dock must not obstruct public access along the foreshore;

- A dock must not interrupt the free movement of water nor cause the formation of land by deposition of sediment by littoral drift upon the bed of a Crown owned body of water;
- Other than a bench, a dock cannot include fixed structures or fuel storage;
- No more than one swimming platform is allowed. It must be placed beyond the line of navigation and its size cannot exceed 9 m<sup>2</sup>. It may not be used for mooring purposes;
- No more than two boatlifts (including those for personal watercraft) may be used, and are not to be placed further than the line of navigation. Boat lifts may be covered provided they are not enclosed on all sides;
- All buoys are to meet the provisions and requirements of the federal **Private Buoy** Regulations established under the authority of the *Canada Shipping Act (Canada)* and administered by Transport Canada as well as the standards and guidelines as set out in the **Canadian Aids to Navigation System (TP 968)**;
- Docks and associated structures, including anchors for buoys, must be constructed of non-toxic materials; and
- The dock and all associated structures must be removed at the end of the boating season and stored off of crown land and above the bank. The anchors may remain on or in the bed of the water body during the winter season.

Existing docks that do not meet the new standard are subject to approval based on the submitted sketch.

## 4.0 Applying for an Authorization for your Temporary, Seasonal Dock for Personal Recreational Use

### 4.1 Who Can Apply?

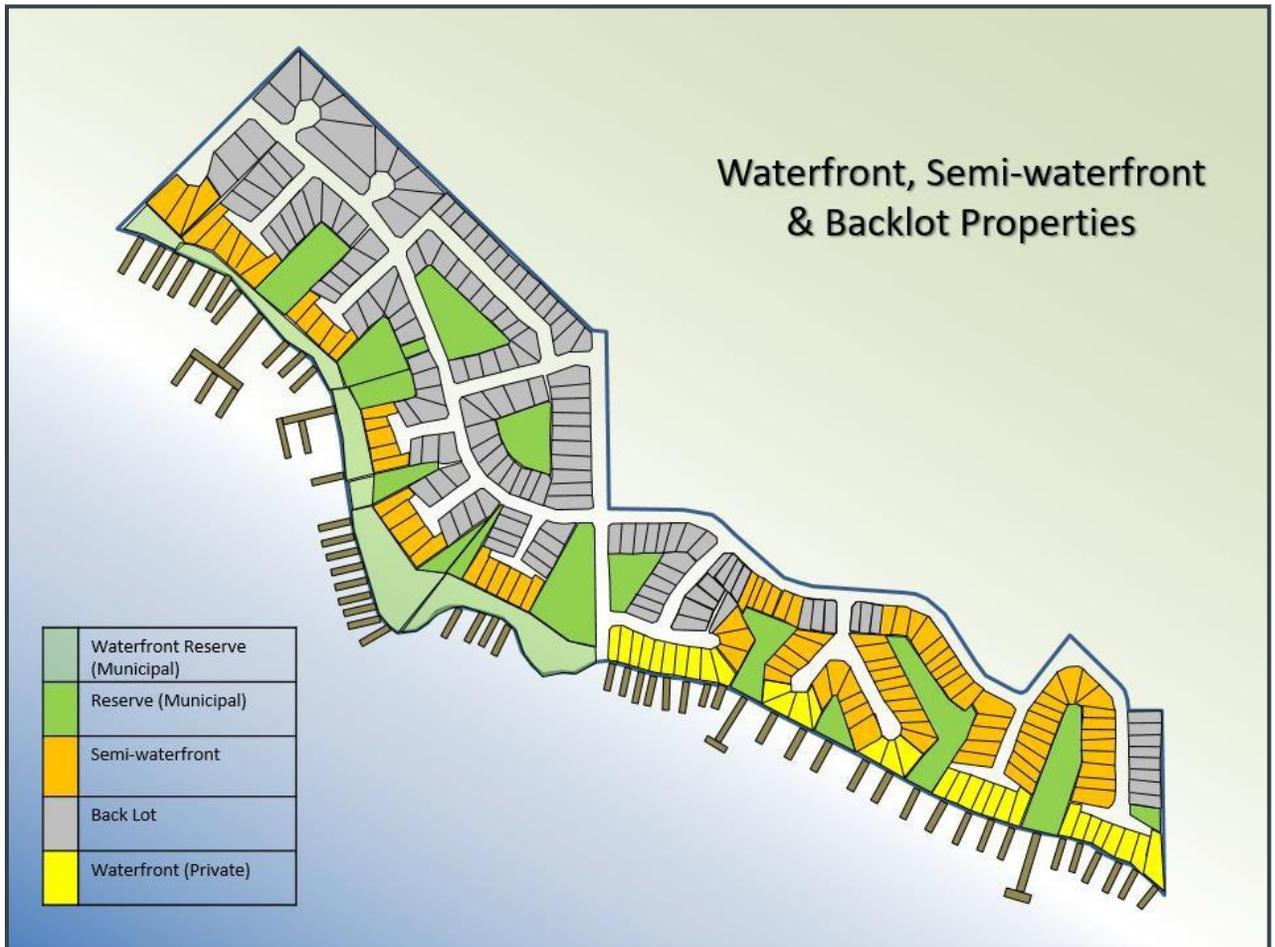
Although there are no lawful restrictions on who can make an application for the use of public land, there are practical considerations for who can make an application to place a dock onto the bed and shore of a lake or river as follows:

- There is no general expectation that every Albertan who does not own a property adjacent to a lake or river should be able to place a dock on a lake or river for recreational purposes. This includes the general public and back-lot owners in multi-lot lake subdivisions and strata properties.
- The applicant needs to have legal access to the waterbody and to the bed and shore upon which a dock is to be placed.
- Waterfront landowners have common law rights that allow them to access the lake (and access their property from the lake) across their entire frontage. This is generally not interfered with, especially if an application is made by a non-waterfront property holder.
- Non-waterfront property holders need the written consent of the waterfront propertyholder before a non-waterfront holder is authorized to place a dock in the lake or river.
- There may be municipal land use bylaws that apply or restrict this activity.
- Where provincial Parks border a lake but do not include the lake, docks may or may not be aligned with or consistent with the management intent of the Park. An applicant is required to provide written consent of the Park prior to AEP authorizing a dock in front of a Park.

## 4.2 Who is a Waterfront Land Owner and Who is Not?

A waterfront landowner is a land owner or lease holder whose land parcel shares a direct property boundary with the lake or river. In multi-lot lake subdivisions, the waterfront property may be a municipal reserve. In such instances, the local municipality is the waterfront land owner.

Properties that abut or share a property boundary with a municipal reserve or are separated from a reservoir by another parcel of land, are also not waterfront properties. These are referred to as semi-waterfront properties as they typically have direct access through such land parcels.



Any land parcel in a multi-lot subdivision that is not waterfront, is technically a backlot property.

### 4.3 Preparing to Apply

The following will be required to be completed before you make your application to the department.

### **4.3.1 Obtain a Client ID from Environment and Parks**

Before the department can accept an application for the use of public land, the applicant must obtain a departmental Client ID. The Client ID is how Environment and Parks associates an applicant with services provided by the Department.

The application is available on-line at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-environment-and-parks-land-forms.aspx#toc-10> under the heading User IDs and Client IDs for access to Industry Online Services, and is to be submitted via the [crownlanddatasupport@gov.ab.ca](mailto:crownlanddatasupport@gov.ab.ca) mailbox.

Once the Client ID is received, save this number for future reference as it will be required information for the application form, and any other future *Public Lands Act* approvals.

### **4.3.2 Sketch**

An authorization for a dock is based on the structure to be approved and where it will be located in the water body.

Each applicant is to provide a sketch to identify where the dock will be placed in relation to the waterfront land parcel. Draw the location and dimensions of the dock in the shaded area on the application form. Include all boat lifts and associated structures.

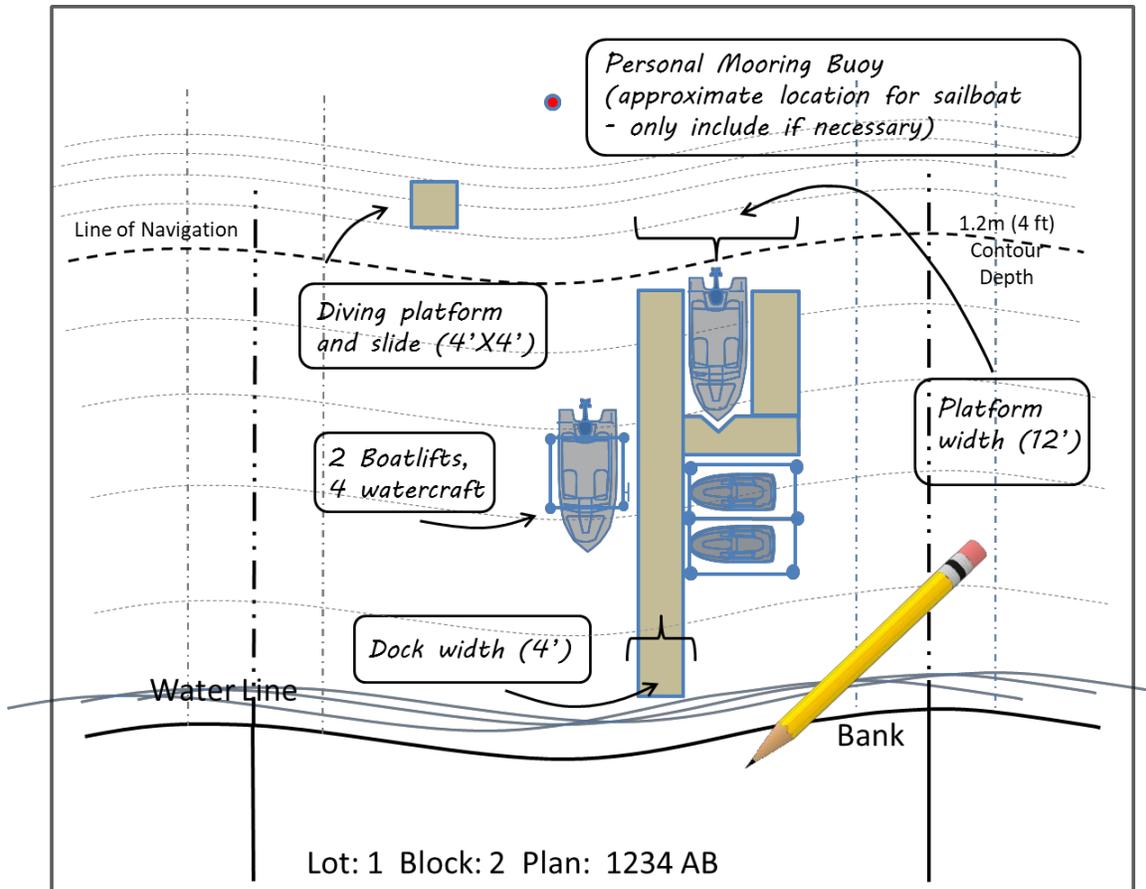
The application form (see sample in appendix 1) has space on the reverse side for the applicant to draw in all mooring structures.

#### **4.3.2.1 New Docks**

If you are applying for authorization for a new dock that you are planning to build or purchase after May 21, 2019, then the dock is not to exceed the dimensional standards reflected in the policy (section 3.2 in this guide). The dock is required to be located within the designated mooring area fronting the waterfront land parcel.

For the specific lot, sketch in all structures and their dimensions, and note the number of watercraft to be moored.

Sketch example: New dock that meets new common dimensional standard.



**Note:** If a new dock was purchased prior to the new common dock standard being created, then the application should be made as if it were an existing dock.

#### 4.3.2.2 Existing docks

There will be many existing docks owned by Alberta residents that may not meet the new common dimensional standards for recreational docks (e.g., dock width). In such cases, the applicant is required to sketch the existing dock and its dimensions to fit within the defined mooring area on the application form. Keep the following in mind:

- For each waterfront holder, only one dock is permitted within the defined mooring area in front of that waterfront parcel.
- The dock must be owned by the waterfront owner and be for personal recreational use.

- Existing docks fronting a waterfront holders' property that do not have the consent of that waterfront holder will need to be removed or relocated.
- Where the waterfront owner is a municipality, more than one dock may be authorized provided that written consent of the waterfront owner (the municipality) is received.

**Note:** If the existing dock obviously extends beyond line of navigation (1.2 m depth), the applicant may be required to shorten the length of the dock to ensure no navigational hazard is created.

### 4.3.3 Written Consent (if required)

If you as an applicant are not the owner of the waterfront land parcel, the department will then require the applicant to obtain the written consent of the waterfront landowner or holder before the application will be considered for approval. You will need to attach this consent to your application.

A waterfront land parcel is one where the private landowner's property boundary is shared with the lake, or is the municipality, which owns a Reserve parcel between the lake and another landward property.

## 4.4 TFA Application Form

A specific TFA application form has been developed for docks.

A copy of this application can be found in Appendix 1 and online on the following Environment and Parks webpages:

- [Lakeshores](#)
- [Temporary Field Authorization and Disposition Operational Approvals](#)

## 4.5 Where to Send your Application

Dock users are required to submit their dock applications to the regional office for the region that the waterbody falls within, according to the following map:

# Contact List and Map for Dock Authorizations



### Legend

- Alberta Boundary
- Environment and Parks Lands Approval Districts
- Responsible Region**
- Lower Athabasca
- Peace
- Red Deer North Saskatchewan
- South Saskatchewan
- Upper Athabasca



Produced by Red Deer-North Saskatchewan Region, Operations Division  
 Base Map Data provided by the Government of Alberta under the Alberta Open Government Licence, November, 2014  
 Information as depicted is subject to change, therefore the Government of Alberta assumes no responsibility for discrepancies at time of use.

Contact List for Dock Authorizations				
Region	District	E-mail	Phone	Office Location
Lower Athabasca	North	neb.1adp@gov.ab.ca	780-743-7120	Fort McMurray
Lower Athabasca	South	neb.2adp@gov.ab.ca	780-623-5279	Lac La Biche
Peace	Peace	nwb.6adp@gov.ab.ca	780-624-6456	Peace River
Peace	Smoky	GrandePrairie.LUapps@gov.ab.ca	780-538-5260	Grande Prairie
Peace	Upper Hay	FortVermillion.LUapps@gov.ab.ca	780-927-8200	Fort Vermillion
Red Deer North Saskatchewan	East	RedDeer.LUApps@gov.ab.ca	403-340-8451	Red Deer
Red Deer North Saskatchewan	West	RockyLU.Clearwater@gov.ab.ca	403-845-8272	Rocky Mountain House
South Saskatchewan	South Saskatchewan	AEP.LuApps-CLGR@gov.ab.ca	403-297-8800	Calgary
Upper Athabasca	Central	luapps-wcr1@gov.ab.ca	780-778-7153	Whitecourt
Upper Athabasca	North	SlaveLake.LUapps@gov.ab.ca	780-849-7377	Slave Lake
Upper Athabasca	South	nes.2adp@gov.ab.ca	780-674-8231	Edson
Operations Infrastructure	Reservoirs	aep.oib.lands@gov.ab.ca		Lethbridge

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Dock TFA applications may be submitted to the regional AEP office over the counter as a hard copy, or by e-mail to the region's general e-mail box as follows:

Contact List for Dock Authorizations				
Region	Land Use District	Email	Phone	Office Location
Lower Athabasca	North	<a href="mailto:neb.1adp@gov.ab.ca">neb.1adp@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-743-7120	Fort McMurray
Lower Athabasca	South	<a href="mailto:neb.2adp@gov.ab.ca">neb.2adp@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-623-5279	Lac La Biche
Peace	Peace	<a href="mailto:nwb.6adp@gov.ab.ca">nwb.6adp@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-624-6456	Peace River
Peace	Smoky	<a href="mailto:GrandePrairie.LUapps@gov.ab.ca">GrandePrairie.LUapps@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-538-5260	Grande Prairie
Peace	Upper Hay	<a href="mailto:FortVermilion.LUapps@gov.ab.ca">FortVermilion.LUapps@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-927-8200	Fort Vermilion
Red Deer North Saskatchewan	East	<a href="mailto:RedDeer.LUApps@gov.ab.ca">RedDeer.LUApps@gov.ab.ca</a>	403-340-8451	Red Deer
Red Deer North Saskatchewan	West	<a href="mailto:RockyLU.Clearwater@gov.ab.ca">RockyLU.Clearwater@gov.ab.ca</a>	403-845-8272	Rocky Mountain House
South Saskatchewan	South Saskatchewan	<a href="mailto:AEP.LuApps-CLGR@gov.ab.ca">AEP.LuApps-CLGR@gov.ab.ca</a>	403-297-8800	Calgary
Upper Athabasca	Central	<a href="mailto:luapps-wcrt@gov.ab.ca">luapps-wcrt@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-778-7153	Whitcourt
Upper Athabasca	North	<a href="mailto:SlaveLake.LUapps@gov.ab.ca">SlaveLake.LUapps@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-849-7377	Slave Lake
Upper Athabasca	South	<a href="mailto:nes.2adp@gov.ab.ca">nes.2adp@gov.ab.ca</a>	780-674-8231	Edson

For mooring approvals on Crown owned **reservoirs**, contact the following:

Branch	Email	Office Location
Operations Infrastructure Branch	<a href="mailto:aep.oib.lands@gov.ab.ca">aep.oib.lands@gov.ab.ca</a>	Lethbridge

For reservoirs owned by Irrigation Districts or managed by a utility, contact the reservoir manager directly for authority to place docks on the reservoir lands.

## 4.6 Fees

There is no cost for obtaining a dock permit for personal recreational use.

## 4.7 Seasonal Dock TFA Application Review and Decision Process

### 4.7.1 Completeness Review

An Administrative review is done to determine if the TFA application is complete and can therefore proceed to a merit review.

The following elements or documents must be supplied with the TFA application in order for the application to be accepted as complete:

- Client ID is valid
- Sketch that reflects the following:
  - Accurate legal land description of lot location that the dock is in front of
  - the location of the dock within the defined mooring area
  - the location of any swimming platform or mooring anchor and buoy
- Signed declaration that the applicant is a waterfront landowner
- Consent(s) of the waterfront landowner is attached (if the applicant is not a waterfront landowner)

If any of the above are not provided, the application will be rejected as incomplete.

If the applicant is not a waterfront landowner or holder and no written consent of the waterfront owner/holder is provided, the application will be rejected.

#### **4.7.2 Merit Review and Decision**

Prior to making a decision whether to authorize a temporary, seasonal dock for personal recreational use, the following general factors are considered by the Director:

- Is the applicant a waterfront or semi-waterfront holder?
- How much aquatic vegetation clearing is likely to occur next to a dock. If clearing is required, is a separate approval for that activity required?
- Does the dock support a waterfront holder's right to egress and ingress to and from the body of water?
- Is the use of a dock aligned and consistent with any approved land use plan or local municipal zoning and land use bylaws that addresses this use of the water body?
- Does the dock hinder the ability of the public to have access to and along the bed and shore of the water body?
- Do the proposed dimensions of the dock have the potential to interfere with the ingress and egress of watercraft by neighbouring waterfront holders? and
- Are there likely to be any impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed structure on the aquatic environment?

If the land use is approved, the TFA authorization is issued at the regional level through district offices by departmental field staff.

#### **4.7.3 Approval Process**

Once the application is received, it will be reviewed to ensure all the required information is provided. This includes applicant information, any required consents (if applicable), and a complete sketch. If there is missing information, the application will be rejected and you will need to re-apply.

If there are any extenuating circumstances or other issues to be addressed, approval of the application could be delayed.

If approved, conditions may be applied to the approval. The approval holder is bound by any condition that forms part of the approval.

The approximate timeline between application to receiving a decision should be no more than two weeks, however this will be dependent on the volume of applications for all public land activities the department is processing.

## 5.0 Term of TFA Authorization

If the application is approved, the authorization will be issued for no more than a five (5) year term.

TFAs are not renewable. If necessary, a new TFA may be issued after the expiry date.

## 6.0 Security and Rental

Docks that are used for personal recreational use by a waterfront or semi-waterfront landowner are not subject to additional fees.

If a dock is being rented out for a fee, the department will treat it as a commercial enterprise and charge security and rental. The department will also require the user to make an application for a formal disposition for the dock.

## 7.0 Change in Waterfront Property Ownership

The TFA authorization is only valid for the individual that it was issued to.

**Note:** If a waterfront property changes ownership and the TFA holder is not the new waterfront holder, the TFA holder must resubmit landowner consent to maintain validity of the dock authorization.

Original signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of approver

Program/branch name

Environment and Parks

# Appendix 1 – Dock TFA Application Form

## Public Lands Act Application for Temporary Field Authorization Personal Use Recreational Docks

<b>1.0 Applicant Information</b>	
<b>1.1 Name of Individual:</b> <input type="text"/>	<b>Province/Territory:</b> Choose an item.
<b>Client ID:</b> Click here to enter text.	<b>Phone number:</b> Click here to enter text.
If you do not have a client ID fill out the on-line <a href="#">application</a> and e-mail to <a href="mailto:crownlanddata@gov.ab.ca">crownlanddata@gov.ab.ca</a>	
<b>Address:</b> Click here to enter text.	<b>Email:</b> Click here to enter text.
<b>City:</b> Click here to enter text.	
<b>Postal Code:</b> Click here to enter text.	
<b>Fax number:</b> Click here to enter text.	
Are you 18 years of age or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>1.2 Are you an employee of the Government of Alberta (GOA) or member of the Legislative Assembly?</b> Choose an item. <i>If you are a GOA employee, attach approval from the Deputy Minister of your department in accordance with the Code of Conduct &amp; Ethics for the Public Service of Alberta. If you are an MLA, please determine what approval documentation must be submitted with this application and attach.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approval attached	
<b>2.0 General Information</b>	
<b>2.1 Proposed activity (check all that apply):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Dock <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming Platform <input type="checkbox"/> Mooring Buoy <input type="checkbox"/> Boat Lift(s)	
<b>2.2 Is this a new or existing mooring structure?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Existing <input type="checkbox"/> New	
<b>2.3 Activity footprint</b> Size (m <sup>2</sup> ) of dock terminal platform: Click here to enter text. Width (m) of dock walkway: Click here to enter text. Number of boat lifts per dock: Click here to enter text. Size (m <sup>2</sup> ) of swimming platform: Click here to enter text.	

Information about Alberta's Lakeshores: <https://www.alberta.ca/lakeshores.aspx>

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**3.0 Legal Land Location**

3.1 Are you the waterfront lot owner or lease holder?  Yes  No  
If you are not the waterfront landowner, attach consent of the waterfront landowner.

Legal Land Location of the waterfront parcel

Lot	Block	Plan Number	or	Title Number

or

LSD	QTR	Sec	TWP	RGE	M

**4.0 Statutory Declaration**

4.1 Statutory Declaration  
Waterfront holders  
I, [Click here to enter text.](#) of [Click here to enter text.](#), in the Province of Alberta, do solemnly declare that I am either: a) the person who is registered under the *Land Titles Act* as the owner of the fee simple estate in the land directly adjoining the bank of the applicable water body, or b) the holder of a lease according to the records of Alberta Environment and Parks for the land directly adjoining the bank of the applicable water body, AND I MAKE this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath.

**5.0 Consent**

5.1 Non-Waterfront Holders  
Non-waterfront landowners and semi-waterfront landowners or holders whose lands abut the boundary of a municipal reserve parcel that is waterfront, must provide written proof that the waterfront holder (e.g., the municipality that owns the environmental or municipal reserve parcel) has consented to the placement of a dock in front of the land parcel.

Consent attached

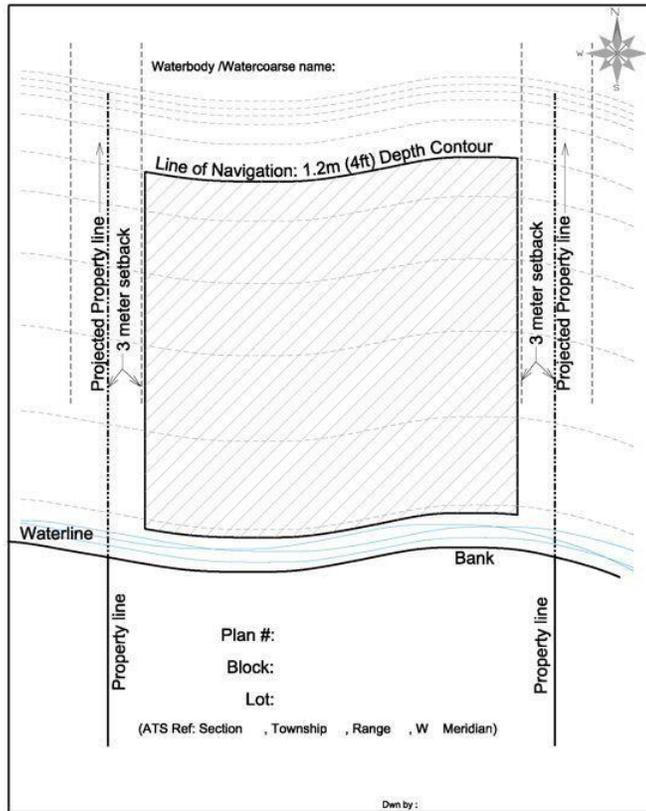
**Privacy statement**

The personal information contained on this form is collected under the authorization of Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and is managed in accordance with Part 2 of the *FOIP Act*. It will be used for the purpose of monitoring public land utilization in accordance with the *Public Lands Act*. Alberta Environment and Parks will disclose all information contained on this form, including personal information, to anyone requesting a copy in accordance with Section 166-167 of the *Public Lands Administration Regulation*. For further information, please contact Provincial Programs Branch, Operations Division, Alberta Environment and Parks, 5th Floor, South Petroleum Plaza, 9915-108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2G8. Telephone 780-427-3570.



**6.0 Sketch Plan**

Alberta Environment and Parks has established that the acceptable footprint of a dock for personal recreational use should not extend beyond the Line of Navigation or not occupy more than 50% of the available defined mooring area. For the specific lot, sketch within the shaded area all associated structures and their dimensions, and note the number of watercraft to be moored.



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