

DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Series: VII GENERAL DIVISIONAL POLICIES  
Subject: Fishing Tournaments and Big Fish Contests

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Section I. General

1.01 This agency will require permits for all fishing tournaments and big fish contests on all public waters within the State.

1.01.a All open, club, and Catch-Photo-Release (CPR) tournaments, youth derbies and tournaments whether by vessel or from shoreline for all gamefish species will require permits and must meet all guidelines. A tournament is defined as any gathering of anglers where money, points, prizes, or other incentives are given out or awarded.

1.01.b All permits will be issued on a "first come, first served" basis. Applications not completed in their entirety or incorrectly will not be accepted.

1.01.c All applications for motorboat tournaments on reservoirs, lakes, and commercially navigable rivers (Ohio, Kanawha, and Monongahela rivers) must list the specific waterbody or river pool as well as the ramp/access site to be used. Non-motorized vessel tournament applications for waters other than reservoirs, lakes and commercially navigable rivers may list the river(s) on which the tournament is requesting to be held. No "statewide" permits will be issued for motorboat/vessel tournaments.

1.01.d Approved permits for motorboat/vessel tournaments to be held on reservoirs, lakes, and commercially navigable rivers will be issued for specific ramps or access locations and not for an entire water body. **Applicants cannot change ramp/access location or waterbody without prior written approval from WVDNR Fish Management.**

1.01.e Multiple tournament applications (See Appendix 1 for official tournament application) for the same date and water body may be approved if parking and access facilities allow.

- 1.01.f A minimum of 25% of the boat parking lot capacity will be reserved for non-tournament anglers/boaters at each public ramp owned or managed by federal and/or state agencies including, but not limited to, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the WV Division of Natural Resources. Tournament permits for these access sites will specify a maximum number of boats allowed to ensure compliance with this policy. Applicants may be assigned additional access sites on the same water body if the tournament exceeds parking limitations for requested ramp. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis if requested by the tournament director or organizer and additional overflow parking is available at the specified access area. The tournament may obtain permission from privately owned or managed access sites, wherein the tournament and the private owner or manager will work out the terms of the arrangement for use by the tournament participants.
  - 1.01.g The WV DNR reserves the right to close any public water for special events and irregular circumstances. (e.g., NH&FD's, emergency, or unsafe conditions)
  - 1.01.h Only five tournaments can be scheduled per application with a two-week interval between successive applications from each applicant to allow for equitable use of all locations.
  - 1.01.i Applications for each upcoming year will not be accepted until December 1<sup>st</sup>. All applications received prior to that date will be held and combined with the December 1<sup>st</sup> applications and randomly drawn for order of issue.
  - 1.01.j Any applicants found in violation of these policies will forfeit all currently approved permits and will not be able to submit additional applications for a term of up to 1 year as determined by the WVDNR Director.
- 1.02 All permits issued for tournaments must meet the following guidelines.
- 1.02.a Tournament directors, and/or their designee, shall maintain the trailer license plate numbers and participant cell phone numbers for each participant. This information must be available during the tournament and any requested information must be provided to WVDNR personnel during the event. Tournament directors, and/or designee, must also provide their cell number on the application and be available at the weigh-in location during the entire weigh-in event. If cell service is not

available onsite, a designee will find a location where cell service is available and so shall remain during the weigh-in event to provide information if needed.

- 1.02.b All participants' boats must be clearly marked by always displaying a brightly colored motor band during the tournament event. The motor band can be as simple as flagging tape clearly displayed on the head of the outboard motor, the trolling motor, or the rear running light post.
- 1.02.c Dead or injured fish unable to swim away must not be released back into the waters after weigh-ins.
- 1.02.d Fish that are not released must be reported as dead in the data returned to the DNR Fish Management. All fish not released must be removed to an offsite location. Tournament Directors are granted permission to remove these mortalities to an offsite location on the day of the event.
- 1.02.e No tournaments with weigh-ins allowed on waters with No Harvest Regulations.
- 1.02.f Waters with special permitting issues
  - 1.02.f.1 **Stephens Lake** — From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, no daytime (6 a.m. — 10 p.m.) tournaments will be permitted on weekends (Friday through Sunday) and holidays. All tournaments must be scheduled with Raleigh County Parks & Recreation Authority prior to obtaining a DNR permit, and full launch fees apply between May 1 and Sept 30.
  - 1.02.f.4 **Summersville Lake** — From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, no daytime tournaments, no tournaments launching from the Marina ramp, and all tournaments must be held between 7pm to 7am during this period.
  - 1.02.f.6 **Sutton Lake** — From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, no daytime tournaments on weekends or holidays at Bee Run Access site. No parking or time restrictions at the South Abutment access site. Standard requirements at campground access site.
- 1.02.g The WVDNR Director has the discretion to deny, suspend, or revoke any permit for cause. "Cause" includes, but is not limited to, false

information in an application, a failure, or a history of failing to comply with any term or condition of the permit or these administrative procedures, a violation or a history of violating Chapter 20 of the West Virginia Code or Title 58 of the Code of State Rules, contests which are deemed to adversely affect the subject resources, tournaments which infringe upon the use and enjoyment of non-contest anglers, and any other circumstance which contradicts the intent of the permit or the mission of the WVDNR.

- 1.03 All tournaments with weigh-ins must meet the following fish handling requirements.
- 1.03.a All weigh ins must be conducted in a place that does not cause congestion or restrict access to boater or angler access areas and facilities. Tournament organizers conducting weigh-ins shall have appropriate equipment to handle, measure or weigh all fish brought to weigh-in. If using dip tanks or holding tanks, they must be properly aerated, and water treated with prophylactic salt treatments as detailed in this policy.
  - 1.03.b Any tournament using a holding tank for weigh-in must have a minimum 200-gallon tank. If holding capacity of tank is reached (1 pound of fish per gallon of water), fish must be released before adding additional fish to the holding tank.
  - 1.03.c All weigh-in tanks must use medical-grade oxygen applied through micro diffuser stones at a rate of 0.5 to 1.0 CFH as set on the flow meter. Example of acceptable diffuser stones (<https://pentairaes.com/point-fourmicro-bubble-diffusers-mbd.html>) Example of acceptable flow meter model FMRI (<https://pentairaes.com/air-oxygen-flow-meters.html>).
  - 1.03.d Oxygen must be used continuously beginning 30-minutes prior to weigh-in until 30-minutes prior to release of fish.
  - 1.03.e Prophylactic salt treatments are required in all holding tanks. Examples of acceptable salt/water treatments include but are not limited to "Better Bait" (<https://www.bestbait.com/product/better-bait/>)
  - 1.03.f Water temperature in holding tanks must be kept within 5 degrees Fahrenheit of the tournament lake/river surface water temperature. If the holding tank temperatures exceed this temperature requirement,

then all fish must be returned to the water body immediately after weigh-in.

- 1.03.g If no holding tank is used, all fish must be transported to weigh-in and back to the water in weigh-in bags or larger, portable containers of water treated with prophylactic salts as outlined in this policy. Weigh-in bags and any other fish transport methods must contain enough treated fresh water to support the fish being carried.
- 1.03.h After tournament is completed, all equipment used to hold, measure or weigh, aerate, or transport the fish shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to prevent transfer of disease and aquatic invasive species. An example of acceptable disinfectant treatments includes but are not limited to "Virkon" (<https://pentairaes.com/aquatic-disinfectant.html>).
- 1.03.i All off-site weigh-ins must have prior written approval from the WVDNR Director.

1.04 All tournaments must collect and submit data.

- 1.04. a All tournaments must thoroughly complete and submit official WVDNR reporting forms (See Appendix 2 for official data reporting form) for each tournament. Additionally, for any tournaments that may be held on multiple waterbodies concurrently on the same day(s), reporting forms must be completed and submitted for each waterbody separately. Youth derbies are exempt.
- 1.04. b All reporting forms must be post-marked or emailed to the DNR Fisheries Section **no later than 15 days after the event**. If completed reporting forms are not received, all future permit applications will be denied. Mail forms to:

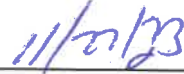
WV Division of Natural Resources  
Attn: Asst. Chief of Fish Management  
324 4<sup>th</sup> Ave  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
or email to [DNRFishTournament@wv.gov](mailto:DNRFishTournament@wv.gov)

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Brett W. McMillion, Director



Date

**Appendix 1**

**West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Fishing Tournament Application**

Please enter all information. Incomplete forms will not be processed.

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name/Tournament Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this your first request this year? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Type of fish for which the tournament will be held: \_\_\_\_\_

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Ramp &amp; Water Body</u>	<u>Max # Vessels</u>	<u>Start Time</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Failure to comply with WVDNR policies on fishing tournaments/contests could result in penalties as outlined in 1.01.j of the policy.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Note: Information from this application will be made available to the public.

Mail application to: WV Division of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Resources Section  
324 4th Avenue, Rm. 306  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
Phone: 304-558-6200  
or Email: [DNRFishTournament@wv.gov](mailto:DNRFishTournament@wv.gov)





**WV DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES TOURNAMENT REPORT FORM  
(continued)**

**Section 3**

Species	Total Number	Total Weight*	Total Length**	Heaviest Weight*	Longest Length
Blue Catfish					
Channel Catfish					
Flathead Catfish					
Musk					
Walleye					
Trout					

Return Report Form to: WV Division of Natural Resources  
Attn: Asst. Chief of Fish Management  
324 4<sup>th</sup> Ave  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
or email to [DNRFishTournament@wv.gov](mailto:DNRFishTournament@wv.gov)

### Appendix 3

#### **Tournament Angler Expectations for Fish Handling**

Anglers should land fish and remove hooks quickly to minimize time out of water. Fish should be kept off the carpet and bottom of the boat if possible. This can injure the fish and will remove slime coat.

- Wet your hands, measuring boards, etc., before touching the fish.
- Livewells and personal weigh-in bags must be properly cleaned and disinfected before every tournament to prevent transfer of disease or aquatic invasive species.
- When fish are in livewells, the water pumps must run continually. When water temperatures are 75 degrees or more, recirculating pumps need to run continuously.
- Ice should be bagged and ready to put in livewells on hot days to maintain lower temperatures. Do not increase or decrease water temperatures more than 5 degrees from the tournament lake/river temperature.
- Livewell lids should be continuously vented or opened regularly throughout the day to allow gas exchange to occur.
- When handling larger fish, use two hands to support the fish horizontally to decrease the chance of injury.
- When nets are used, select net material that is made from rubber or nylon to protect the slime coat.
- Livewell capacity should not be less than 1-gallon of water for every pound of fish contained.
- During weigh-ins, anglers should leave fish in their livewells as long as possible. Do not keep fish in weigh-in bags for extended periods of time because fish can use all the dissolved oxygen in a filled bag in as little as 5 minutes. Use dip tanks provided by the tournament organizers whenever possible.
  - Filled weigh-in bags should never be placed on hot surfaces, such as pavement due to the chance of increasing water temperature in the weigh-in bag and causing harm to the fish.