



Boathouses in Green Lake County

Land Use Planning and Zoning Department
Green Lake County, WI

571 County Road A
Green Lake, WI 54941
Phone: (920) 294-4156

The current shoreland zoning ordinance regulates setbacks from lot lines, amount of impervious surfaces allowed on the lot, and placement of patios, walkways from the home to the water, and boathouses, among other things. Contact the Land Use Planning and Zoning Department with location-specific questions related to these topics, and ask for the Shoreland Zoning Specialist.

Can I build a boathouse? Current standards do allow for boathouses as water recreation storage as part of responsible development of the near-shore area. Below is a summary of the Green Lake County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance allowances:

What is a boathouse? A permanent structure used for the storage of watercraft and associated materials and includes all structures which are totally enclosed, have roofs or walls, or any combination of these structural parts.

What is the Viewing & Access Corridor? A part of your water frontage, a maximum of 35ft wide for every 100ft of frontage owned, also interpreted as 35% of the total frontage owned. This is the area that may be utilized for the viewing of and access to the water. All new structures must be located entirely in this area, including boathouses, fire pits, patios, walkways, water access, piers and docks. This preserves the shoreland buffer zone which protects the lake. Trees and vegetation outside this corridor are protected and must not be removed unless dead, dying, or diseased.

Boathouse Construction Criteria

Location Requirements

- Must be above the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM)
- Must be a dry storage unit
- Only one boathouse per lot
- Final grades of construction site shall be at a slope that is naturally stable, which depends on soil type
- Constructed in conformity with floodplain zoning standards
- Footprint entirely within the viewing & access corridor
- Adheres to minimum side yard setbacks

Use Restrictions

- Designed and constructed solely for storage of boats & related equipment
- Does not contain plumbing and is not to be used for human habitation
- Patio doors, fireplaces, and other features inconsistent with the uses exclusively as a boathouse, are not permitted
- Existing boathouses have different standards for roofs, ask for specifics relative to your property



Dimensional Standards

- One story high, with sidewalls not exceeding 10ft in height
- No larger than 16ft width by 24ft depth
- Roof pitched, 2/12 up to a max of 6/12
- Roof not to be used as deck, platform, or similar uses
- Boathouses count towards impervious surface calculations

Design Constraints

- Main door must face the water
- Earth-toned color is required for all exterior surfaces
- On existing slopes of 50% or more, boathouse construction shall be designed to not destabilize the slope

What is an Impervious Surface? Any area that releases as runoff all or a majority of the precipitation that falls on it is an impervious surface.

Written to limit new runoff to the water, surfaces that shed water rather than infiltrating it are limited to 15% of the lot. Property owners may exceed 15% by mitigating the impacts of new impervious surfaces, i.e. through installing infiltration systems (e.g. swales, rain gardens).

Existing lots with greater than 15% are allowed to maintain and repair those surfaces, or replace with similar surfaces. Relocation on the lot can be allowed, provided there is not a net increase in impervious surfaces. This is the "grandfathering clause," as many existing lots exceed the current standards.

$$\text{Impervious Calculation} = 100 \left(\frac{\text{Area of all impervious surfaces within 300ft of OHWM}}{\text{Total Area of Lot}} \right)$$

