

Title 13 ► Chapter 12

Boathouse Construction

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Sec. 13-12-1 Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Big Bend to regulate by permit the construction of boathouses in the Town of Big Bend.

Sec. 13-12-2 Authority.

The Town Board of the Town of Big Bend has the specific authority under Sec. 175.25, Wis. Stats., and general authority under its village powers under Sec. 60.22, Wis. Stats., to adopt this ordinance. Includes any construction on or after effective date of January 19 2026 of this ordinance.

Sec. 13-12-3 Definition.

Definition from Wis. Admin. Code NR 115.03(1h):

“**Boathouse**” means 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.

“**Viewing and Access Corridor**” means a strip of vegetated land that allows safe pedestrian access to the shore through the vegetative buffer zone.

Sec. 13-12-4 Permit.

A Rusk County Zoning Shoreland Land Use Permit from the County and a Town of Big Bend Building Permit from the Town are required. Boathouses are exempt from shoreline setback requirements. Erosion Control measures shall be used during construction to minimize erosion and limit run-off. Fees apply: See **Town of Big Bend Fee Schedule, Ordinance 1-3-1 Fee Schedule.**

NOTE: The issuance of a land use and a building permit does not include the approval of a structural boat ramp, rail system, or the like. Ramps and rail systems shall be approved separately by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Sec. 13-12-5 Boathouse Location, Design and Construction Requirements.

- (a) Only one boathouse per buildable lot and it shall not be the first structure on the lot.
- (b) The standards for removal of shoreline vegetation shall be complied according to the **General Code of Rusk County Sec. 50-189. Vegetation Standards** and the structure shall be located entirely within the viewing and access corridor. The structure shall be set back a minimum of four feet from and one foot above the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM).
- (c) Construction shall require a map of survey to demonstrate the location of the proposed structure along with floodplain information and all required setbacks including at least 5 feet from side lot line.
- (d) Boathouses shall not be constructed into an existing slope of more than 45%.
- (e) The structure shall not exceed 400 square feet in size (outside dimension).
- (f) The width of the structure, parallel to the shoreline, to length ratio shall not exceed 1:3 (i.e. 10ft by 30ft).
- (g) The structure shall have a gabled roof with a pitch that equals or exceeds a 4/12 (rise to run) pitch and shall not be designed or used as a deck, observation platform or similar uses.
- (h) The structure shall only be a single story with a wall height not to exceed 10 feet.
- (i) The structure shall have no attached or detached decks, patios, screened areas or walkways.
- (j) For any walls at ground level or above the structure framing shall only be built out of wood.
- (k) The structure shall not contain any plumbing or heating components, cooking facilities, fireplaces, or patio doors and shall not be used for human habitation or occupancy.
- (l) The structure shall have a water body facing garage-type door at least 7 feet wide.
- (m) The structure may contain up to one service door no greater than 36 inches in width.
- (n) The structure may contain a maximum of 10 square feet of window surface on each of the three sides not located on the water body. No windows are allowed on the water body side nor on the roof of the structure.
- (o) The siding and roofing color schemes shall be muted and non-reflective earth tones.

Sec. 13-12-6 Enforcement.

The boathouse shall be inspected by the Big Bend Zoning Administrator and Town UDC Inspector.

Sec. 13-12-7 Penalties.

Any person, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity that fails to comply with the provisions of this ordinance shall, upon conviction, pay a forfeiture as per the Town Fee Schedule plus the applicable surcharges, assessments, and costs for each violation. Each day a violation exists or continues constitutes a separate offense under this ordinance. In addition, the Town Board may seek injunctive relief from a court of record to enjoin further violations.

Sec. 13-12-8 Severability.

If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable.