



How to Use the Watercraft Inspection Report

Each day that you conduct watercraft inspections, you will be collecting data about boater behaviors and awareness on the Watercraft Inspection Report form. The forms are designed to be used at one boat landing for one day. Each day you inspect boats, you will use a new report form, and you may use multiple report forms if you visit more than one boat landing in a day. If you run out of room on the report form during your time at the landing that day, it's no problem - just start a new form and staple it to the other forms that you complete at that boat landing for that date. Below are a few guidelines to assist you in effectively collecting and recording the correct information on your form.

Preparing the Form for Inspections

To get your inspection form ready to enter data, fill in the top line with the who, what, when, and where information.

- ◆ **Inspector Name(s):** Enter your name here. You may include the names of any other inspectors who are working with you at the boat landing on that day. Indicate whether you are volunteering your time or being paid to do inspections by checking either the “Volunteer” or “Paid” box.
- ◆ **Date:** Enter the date you are conducting inspections. Remember, data forms can only be used for one day on one waterbody at one boat landing. If you go to another boat landing the same day, start using a new form.
- ◆ **Waterbody Name:** Enter the name of the lake where you are conducting inspections.
- ◆ **County:** Enter the name of the county in which you are conducting inspections. Since many lakes have similar names, this helps us know the exact location.
- ◆ **Landing Location Description:** Enter the name of the boat landing where you are inspecting. If the landing has no name, describe your location on the lake as thoroughly as possible. Later when you're ready to enter your data into the online database, we can make sure the correct landing names are available for your waterbody.

Collecting Data During Inspections

Now you're ready to begin inspections. When you encounter a boater, you will introduce yourself and begin your conversation with them about AIS. The questions to ask them are outlined on the form as follows, and you will record their responses, in most cases by marking the appropriate boxes on the data form.

- ◆ Under “Inspection Time”, record the time of day when you begin inspecting each boat.



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- ◆ In the “Boat Was...” section, note if the boat or trailer was entering the water or leaving the water. On waters that have aquatic invasive species already present, inspections should take place as boaters and anglers are leaving the landing. Sharing information with them as they leave the water helps ensure the AIS are being contained in that waterbody and not being spread elsewhere. On waters free of AIS, inspectors have a choice of educating boaters when they’re entering or leaving the water. Either time offers a good opportunity to share information.
 - ◆ The “Questions to Ask Boater” section includes all of the items that you should talk about with the boater. Questions include:
 - **In the past 30 days, how many times have you been contacted by an inspector?**
Answers to this question allow us to learn more about how many boaters and anglers we are reaching with inspections. It also helps you understand the boater’s awareness of AIS and boat inspections. Boaters who have never talked to an inspector before will need more information than someone who has been inspected previously. If a boater states that they have been inspected more than a few times in the past 30 days, then they do not need to complete the survey again. This will help prevent collecting data on the same boaters over and over.
 - **Was boat used during the past 5 days on a different waterbody?** If the answer is yes, record the name (and county and state if applicable) of the last waterbody. This allows us and local groups to compile information on boater traveling patterns.
 - **In a typical month of boating, about how many waterbodies do you visit?** Similar to the previous question, responses will help us better understand how boaters travel. We can determine the average number of waters visited by boaters each month, and how common it is for boaters and anglers to “lake-hop” (visited numerous lakes in a short period of time).
 - **Last time you went boating, please describe the steps you took when removing your boat from the water.** This open-ended question will allow boaters to list the steps they took, without an inspector prompting them. If the boater took no steps after his last boating trip, then “Took No Steps” should be marked. If you do not ask this question (i.e. if you run out of time), then mark the column “I Did Not Ask Boater”. Boater and angler prevention behavior is very important to us, as the prevention steps can keep AIS from spreading around the state. However, it is difficult to determine if behaviors are occurring as often as boaters report them. Hopefully this new wording and format will allow us to gather more data on their actual behaviors.
 - **In 2009, Wisconsin laws were passed that prevent the transport of aquatic plants, animals, and water from one waterbody to another. This includes draining water from containers holding your catch and livewells. Were you aware that this is the law?** With this question, you can let folks know that there are laws that enforce the recommended preventative measures, and that you just want to help them learn about them so that they won’t be issued citations for not complying. The intent of this question



is not to bully the boater, but simply to see if word has gotten around about the existence of the laws and what the laws require.

- The “Number of People Contacted” question refers to the number of people who heard your message. This can include any children who were listening while their parents prepared to launch their boats or individuals who were simply visiting the landing.

Wrapping Up After Inspections

Once you’ve completed your inspections at that boat landing for the day, you may have one form or many forms full of the data that you’ve collected. Before you put the forms aside to enter later, be sure to do just a few quick things to make sure your data form is complete.

- ◆ Fill in any additional thoughts or comments you’d like to record in the “Comments” section at the bottom of the form, such as the weather conditions, if there were any unusual occurrences that day, or anything else you’d like to share.
- ◆ In the “Total Hours Spent at this Location” box, record how many hours you have been at the landing.
- ◆ Lastly, total each column on the datasheet and enter the total number in the last row titled “Totals”. To do this, count the number of checks or marks you have made in each column and record that number in the “Totals” row (the exception being the waterbody and county/state names as they cannot be totaled). Don’t forget, data is collected and entered for each landing each day. So, if you have multiple datasheets, you’ll count the column marks on all of the datasheets and have a grand total for each column that includes the data from all sheets.

Now you’re ready to enter your data into the online database known as SWIMS (Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System). More information and instructions on how to enter data can be found in the following pages. **Best of luck in your watercraft inspection program, and remember to let boaters know that they’re making a difference by following the prevention steps!**