

**WAC 232-12-168 Fishing contests.**

- (1) Contest defined: By definition, a fishing contest exists when 6 or more persons fish competitively and determine winners, regardless of prize value.
- (2) Application:
  - (a) Fishing contest permit applications should be submitted to the department by November 1 of each year for contests that are to take place the following calendar year. After November 1, applications must be submitted not less than 30 days prior to the date for which the contest is proposed.
  - (b) Applications must include the permit fee required by RCW 77.32.211. The fee will be returned if the permit is denied. No more than seven permits will be issued to any one permittee during a calendar year. The fee is \$24 per permit.
- (3) Approval:
  - (a) Fishing contests which adversely affect fish or wildlife resources or other recreational opportunity may be denied.
  - (b) Contests will not be allowed on sea-run cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden or bull trout.
  - (c) Contests involving only juveniles or the handicapped may exceed the participation limits in contests per month, contests per year, or boats per contest day with permission from the director. Also, contests involving only juveniles may target any fish species except sea-run cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden or bull trout, under one permit.
- (4) Prize value: Total prize value per contest will not exceed \$400 when trout, steelhead, char, whitefish, grayling, or kokanee are included as target species; provided that contests wherein other species not listed above are targeted, or where bass or walleye are the targeted species and at least 90 percent of bass or walleye are released alive and in good condition after the contest, may qualify for no limitation on amount of prize. Contests involving only juveniles are not required to meet 90 percent live release requirements even if bass or walleye are included as a target species.
- (5) Legal requirements, all contests:
  - (a) Fishing contest permits must be in the possession of the contest sponsor or official at the contest site.
  - (b) Contests are restricted to the species and waters approved on the permit. Only those species listed as a target of the contest may be retained by contest participants during bass or walleye contests where all contestants fish at the same time and place.
  - (c) Sponsors must report contest information requested by the department within 30 days after the contest has ended. Subsequent contest permits will not be issued for one year after the date of the contest for which the report was not returned if this requirement is not fulfilled.
  - (d) Contest participants may not restrict public access at boat launches.
  - (e) Contests where all participants expect to fish at the same time from boats on lakes or reservoirs will not last longer than three consecutive days and have the following limits per water:

ACRES	CONTESTS PER DAY	CONTESTS PER MONTH*	CONTESTS PER YEAR		BOATS PER CONTEST DAY
			BASS	WALLEYE	
LESS THAN 300	1	1	5	0	15
301-3,000	1	2	10	2	35
3001-6,000	1	3	15	2	60
6001-10,000	1	4	25	2	125
MORE THAN 10,000**	2	5	35	2	300

\* No more than four weekend days per month nor more than two weekends per month may be scheduled on any water

\*\* When contestants fish at the same time, and are allowed to fish from boats, two separate contest permits may be issued with no more than 150 boats per contest.

- (f) It is unlawful for the fishing contest permittee or any of the contest participants to fail to comply with the conditions of the fishing contest permit, or of general fishing rules not specifically exempted by this permit. Failure of the permittee or any of the contestants to comply with all provisions of the contest permit or of other fishing regulations during a contest may lead to revocation of the permit.
- (6) Special regulations, bass and walleye contests:
- (a) In any contest targeting either bass or walleye, all live bass or walleye must be released alive into the water from which they were caught after being weighed and/or measured. At the end of each day's competition, if the mortality of target fish caught that day exceeds 10%, the contest will be suspended. Suspended contests may be continued (within assigned permit dates) only if the cause of the high mortality can be positively identified, and the cause of the mortality (high waves, equipment deficiency, etc.) ceases or is corrected by contest officials. Contests involving only juveniles are not required to meet the 90 percent live release requirement for any approved species.
  - (b) During bass and walleye contests only, participants may continue to fish while holding up to five fish in possession, as long as one fish is released immediately upon catching a fish which would make the angler in excess of five fish if kept. The fish released may come either from the one just caught, or from the livewell, but at no time may the angler have more than five fish in the livewell.
  - (c) During bass contests, contestants may not use live bait, except that contests involving only juveniles which include bass as a target species may use bait.
  - (d) During bass and walleye contests participants may retain up to five bass and walleye of any size to be weighed in. A tournament angler may not be in possession of more than five bass or walleye from the water being fished, except as authorized under below.
  - (e) The contest director or director designee may exceed possession limits for bass or walleye for the purpose of transporting fish from a weigh-in site to

- an open-water area. During transportation, the transport boat must not leave the water the fish were caught from and a copy of the contest permit must be on board during actual fish transport.
- (f) Livewell dimensions: During walleye tournaments, all livewells used to hold walleye must be at least 34 inches in length and have a water capacity of at least 20 gallons. Not more than 6 walleye may be placed in a single livewell. All livewells must have both a functional freshwater pump and backup aeration capability.
  - (g) Boat identification: All boats used for fishing in bass and walleye contests must be clearly identified according to criteria established by the department.
- (7) Zebra mussel decontamination. Prior to participating in a Washington state fishing contest:
- (a) All contest participants are required to sign a zebra mussel decontamination statement that their boats and/or boat trailers have or have not been in physical contact with any waters east of the Continental Divide for thirty days immediately preceding the contest and, if the boat and/or trailer has been in contact with such waters the participant must complete a decontamination report indicating that the following actions have been taken:
    - (i) A physical inspection has been made of the hull, motor, trailer, livewell and bilge by the contest director or designee, and any zebra mussels, if found, have been disposed of in a garbage container; and
    - (ii) The vessel has been decontaminated by the hull having been:
      - (A) Pressurized washed with hot soapy water; or
      - (B) Washed with a household bleach solution of one part bleach to 19 parts water, or the equivalent;
    - (iii) The motor has been run in a household bleach solution of one part bleach to 19 parts water, or the equivalent, for a minimum of one minute; and
    - (iv) The bilge and any livewells have been flushed, and the flush water disposed in such a manner that the wastewater will not directly enter state waters, either ground or surface.
  - (b) The zebra mussel decontamination statement and decontamination report shall be submitted to the department as part of the fishing contest report.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 75.08.080, 77.12.040. 00-08-038 (Order 00-29), § 232-12-168, filed 3/29/00, effective 5/1/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.020 and 77.12.040. 96-15-096 (Order 96-80), § 232-12-168, filed 7/19/96, effective 8/19/96. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.040. 96-11-079, § 232-12-168, filed 5/13/96, effective 7/1/96; 94-06-014 (Order 629), § 232-12-168, filed 2/18/94, effective 3/21/94; 92-22-015 (Order 577), § 232-12-168, filed 10/21/92, effective 11/21/92. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.040 and 77.04.055. 90-22-057 (Order 464), § 232-12-168, filed 11/5/90, effective 12/6/90. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.040 and 77.16.010. 86-21-017 (Order 280), § 232-12-168, filed 10/6/86.]