

COMMERCIAL HARBOR
TENANT HANDBOOK



USER RESOURCE SERIES

COMMERCIAL HARBOR TENANT HANDBOOK

PREFACE

Welcome and congratulations for securing a permit in a Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DLNR/DOBOR, the department) facility. This document applies to commercial tenants moored in the harbor, using a launch ramp or using loading docks in the harbor as a vessel moored elsewhere (VME). This section discusses requirements and conditions for use of facilities, structures erected on the property with proper permission, etc. The commercial operator is required to comply with these rules in addition to applicable rules summarized in the [Harbor Tenant Handbook](#). It does not contain summaries of all rules that apply to commercial operators.

This document cites passages from the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) and the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR). They are often criticized for being too wordy or written in a style that is difficult to understand. Unfortunately, there are guidelines on how they need to be written and DOBOR is required to follow these guidelines. If you are unsure of the intent of a statute or administrative rule, you can always ask your harbor staff members to help explain these laws for you in easy-to-understand terms.

HAWAII REVISED STATUTES (HRS)

This set of laws gives broad authority to DLNR to regulate the mooring, docking, or anchoring of recreational and commercial vessels; the launching of recreational or commercial vessels at small boat harbors, launching ramps, and other boating facilities; uses of the boating facilities; and requirements for permits and fees for use of a vessel as a principal place of habitation while moored at a state small boat harbor (§200-4). This is a very short list of the authority granted to the department.

To access Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 200, Ocean Recreation and Coastal Areas Program navigate to:

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol03_Ch0121-0200D/HRS0200/HRS_0200-.htm

HAWAII ADMINISTRATIVE RULES (HAR)

One of the most critical things the statutes empower an agency like DLNR to do is create Administrative Rules. Usually, the statutes are written in a way that covers certain aspects of a topic in broad, sweeping strokes. The administrative rules provide the much finer details on how the department must manage its facilities and responsibilities. To get an accurate perspective on an issue, you should look at the pertinent statutes and administrative rules together.

To access Hawaii Administrative Rules, **Title 13, Subtitle 11, Ocean Recreation and Coastal Areas, Chapters 13-230 through 13-257** navigate to:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/rules/>

DISCLAIMER

THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES ARE EXERPTS OF STATUTES (HRS) AND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES (HAR) PERTINENT TO DLNR/DOBOR HARBOR TENANTS AND THE MANGEMENT OF STATE RECREATIONAL BOATING FACILITIES. THE STATEMENTS MADE IN THIS DOCUMENT PARAPHRASE THE HRS AND HAR FOR READABILITY AND ARE NOT BINDING. REFER TO THE FULL VERSIONS OF THESE LAWS FOR THE COMPLETE TEXT.

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COMMERCIAL USE PERMIT OR CATAMARAN REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENT

HAR §13-256-3 All operators of commercial vessels, watercraft or water sports equipment or activities conducting commercial tours or instruction on State ocean waters must obtain a commercial use permit or where applicable a catamaran registration certificate to be issued by the department, except for those operating out of a State commercial harbor. The applicant for such a permit shall comply with the applicable provisions stated in HAR 13-321-50 to 13-231-70.

COMMERCIAL TENANTS AND HARBOR OPERATIONS

REASONABLE PUBLIC BENEFIT

HAR §13-231-50 No regular or extensive use of any state property or facilities for private gain or purposes shall be permitted without corresponding and reasonable benefits and returns to the public.

PERMITTED ACTIVITY

HAR §13-231-51 No person shall engage in any business or commercial activity at any small boat harbor or other small boat facility without:

1. Prior written approval of the department; or
2. The proper execution of an agreement with the department.

DEFINITION OF A COMMERCIAL VESSEL

HAR §13-231-54 "Commercial vessel" as used in this subchapter means a vessel engaged in any trade or business including, but not limited to, carrying passengers for hire, charter fishing, bare boat (demise) or any type of charter maintenance, harvesting coral or similar resources, construction, towing, tow-boating, or other trade or business wherein the vessel is used in any manner to promote the venture, or is registered with the State or documented by the United States Coast Guard for commercial use.

PURPOSE AND USE OF STATE SMALL BOAT HARBORS

HRS §200-9 State small boat harbors are constructed, maintained, and operated for recreational boating activities, landing of fish, and commercial vessel activities. Only vessels in good material and operating condition that are regularly navigated beyond the confines of the small

boat harbor and that are used for those purposes rare permitted to moor, anchor, or berth at a state small boat harbor or use any of its facilities.

CONDITIONS OF A PERMIT FOR A BERTH OR OFFSHORE MOORING

This is a preview of the general conditions of a permit you will agree to when you accept an offer of a berth or an offshore mooring in a DLNR/DOBOR facility. The language in the following list may differ slightly from what is stated on the actual permit.

- The PERMITTEE shall agree to abide by all rules promulgated by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (the Department or DLNR) and conditions of the permit. Rules are available online at <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dbor/borrules.htm>.
- The permitted vessel will be moored at the location in the facility designated by the official representative of the DLNR and tied up in a manner approved by the representative.
- The mooring permit shall not exceed (1) year from date of issue. The permit termination date will be indicated on the permit.
- A new mooring permit may be obtained up to ninety (90) days prior to the termination dated of an existing permit only if all fees and charges due, per Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), have been paid and upon completion of a satisfactory vessel inspection and buoy run. Failure to obtain a new mooring permit prior to the termination date listed on the permit shall result in the owner being charged the rate for vessels moored without a permit, and a one-time payment of \$250.00 shall be paid, as long as it is within 30 days from the date of the expiration. Failure to comply with the 30-day extension shall result in the vessels being required to vacate the harbor, offshore mooring area, and/or ramp facility.
- The PERMITTEE will pay the DLNR fees and charges in advance or before the first day of each month for the use of the berth and any additional facilities or services assigned or provided to the PERMITTEE by the DLNR, in such sums to be calculated according to the provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Section 200-10 (c) and HAR Chapter 13-234, and amendment or increase of such fees. The permit will state the fees that are due for the permitted vessel, including but not limited to (if applicable) mooring charges, electricity, shower fees, gear locker rentals.
- A mooring permit may be cancelled by a boat owner upon thirty (30) days written notification as prescribed in HAR 13-231-9, and charges will be made in accordance with HAR 13-234-2(d). The Security Deposit paid by the PERMITTEE will be applied to any outstanding balance. The remaining will be returned via mail within a reasonable time.

- The mooring privilege may be terminated by the DLNR by written order and the boat will be moved from the mooring at any time should necessity arise. Failure to comply may result in the impoundment of the vessel.
- The mooring permit and related use permits will AUTOMATICALLY EXPIRE if the vessel is absent from its assigned berth, mooring, and/or assigned offshore anchorage area for more than fourteen (14) days unless the holder of the permit applies for and receives permission from the DLNR to retain the use of the assigned berth and related permits upon the vessel's return (HAR13-231-11).
- The DLNR retains the right to not issue a new permit after the termination date of the permit.
- The PERMITTEE shall obtain and continue to secure a Certificate of Insurance policy for General Liability insurance in the amount of \$500,000 and name the State of Hawaii as an additional insured, for as long as the permit is valid. Commercial Permittees shall refer to HAR 13-231-65 on minimum insurance requirements. Vessel owners will be required to show proof of insurance when applying or reapplying for mooring permits. Acceptable coverage would include a minimum of \$500,000 in boat liability insurance (protection and indemnity) that names the State of Hawaii, DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation as additional insured.

BUOY RUNS MAY BE A CONDITION OF YOUR PERMIT

A “buoy run” witnessed by harbor staff is generally required to prove a vessel is capable of leaving the confines of the harbor, is seaworthy, is active (as opposed to dormant) and is eligible for a mooring permit.

Buoy runs are required as a condition of the mooring permit.

To perform a buoy run, the vessel in question must exit the harbor and the harbor ingress/egress channel on its own power, access the open ocean and make a turn around a seaward aid to navigation designated by harbor staff. It must then return to its designated slip.

The buoy run must be witnessed by harbor staff on a day and time designated by harbor staff.

VESSEL INSURANCE

In December 2009, DOBOR instituted mandatory insurance for vessels moored in state boating facilities as a condition of a mooring permit. Acceptable coverage would include a minimum of \$300,000* in boat liability insurance (protection and indemnity) that names the State of Hawaii, Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation as “additional insured” or “additional interest.” **As of 1/1/2014, the minimum coverage was increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000.**

Beginning 3/1/2020, Hawaii Revised Statutes **HRS §200-13.5** required boats 26 feet in length and greater that are registered or documented and operated in State waters to have at least \$100,000 in insurance, in a form and content to ensure that removal and salvage of a grounded vessel are covered.

To acquire and maintain a mooring permit in a DOBOR facility and operate your vessel in State waters, a permit holder/vessel owner must satisfy **both** insurance requirements. Commercial vessels must also be insured according to the conditions of the Commercial Use Permit (CUP) issued by DLNR/DOBOR.

Be sure that your insurance policy covers the (\$500,000) minimum to satisfy the mooring permit requirement, the insurance required for the CUP and the (\$100,000) minimum to ensure removal and salvage of your grounded vessel or you will be held responsible for the cost of removing your vessel if it is left in State waters. You should not assume a \$500,000 policy (for protection and indemnity) also covers removal and salvage.

BERTHS FOR COMMERCIAL VESSELS

HAR §13-231-55 The total number of valid commercial use permits that may be issued for vessels assigned mooring in Ala Wai small boat harbor shall not exceed fifteen per cent of the total number of berths and shall not exceed thirty-five per cent of the total number of berths at the Keehi small boat harbor; provided that at the Ala Wai small boat harbor, vessels issued commercial use permits shall:

- not exceed sixty-five feet in length;
- occupy not more than fifty-six berths located along the row of berths furthestmost mauka or adjacent to Holomoana Street, with the remainder located throughout the Ala Wai small boat harbor, with priority assigned to row five hundred, row seven hundred, and row eight hundred;
- be phased-in in a manner that does not displace any existing recreational boater or existing catamaran operator; and
- include commercial catamarans, for which valid commercial use permits or existing registration certificates have been issued by the department that allow the catamarans to operate upon Waikiki shore waters for hire.
 - The department may issue a temporary mooring permit authorizing the owner to temporarily moor at Ala Wai or Keehi small boat harbors, provided the vessel is not engaged in commercial activities.
 - This section is not applicable to a vessel used principally for recreational purposes (more than fifty per cent of its operating time) but licensed to engage in commercial fishing.

HAR §13-231-58 Limitations on the number of commercial use permits and catamaran registration certificates for vessels assigned permanent moorings. The total number of valid commercial use permits which may be issued for vessels assigned permanent mooring in Manele small boat harbor shall not exceed ten percent of the available berths.

In addition, the total number of valid commercial use permits or catamaran registration certificates that may be issued for vessels assigned mooring in the Ala Wai small boat harbor shall not exceed fifteen per cent of the total number of berths. Other conditions apply.

The total number of valid commercial use permits or catamaran registration certificates that may be issued for vessels assigned mooring at the Keehi small boat harbor shall not exceed thirty-five per cent of the total number of berths.

The total number of valid commercial use permits or commercial registration certificates that may be issued for vessels assigned permanent mooring in the following small boat harbors are:

- (1) Heeia Kea as provided for in section 13-256-73.1
- (2) Haleiwa 20
- (3) Waianae 15
- (4) Nawiliwili 10
- (5) Port Allen 12
- (6) Kikiaola 3
- (7) Kukuiula 4
- (8) Hana 2
- (9) Kaunakakai 9
- (10) Lahaina 32
- (11) Maalaea 29
- (12) Honokohau 120
- (13) Kawaihae (north) 4
- (14) Kawaihae (south) 10
- (15) Kailua-Kona Makai 3
- (16) Kailua-Kona Offshore 8
- (17) Wailoa 10
- (18) Reed's Bay 3
- (19) Keauhou 6

See the full text of this rule for complete details.

HAR §13-231-58 contain details limitations on commercial use permits for vessels moored elsewhere.

SOLICITATIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

Per **HAR §13-231-52** The words "business or commercial activity" includes any solicitations and advertisements, intended for private gain or purposes.

SIGNAGE

HAR §13-231-53 No person shall post or display any signs at a small boat harbor without the prior written approval of the department, except that signs strictly pertaining to the sale of vessels and of maximum dimensions of three feet by three feet shall be permitted on the vessel without approval.

MOORING RATES

HRS §200-10 If a vessel is used for commercial purposes from the vessel's permitted mooring, the permittee shall pay, in lieu of the moorage fee, a monthly fee that shall be the greater of:

- Three per cent of the gross revenues derived from the use of the vessel;
- \$1.50 per passenger carried for hire; or
- Two times the moorage fee that would otherwise be assessed for a recreational vessel of the same size.

INSPECTIONS

Per **HAR §13-231-45**, commercial vessels with a valid DLNR/DOBOR permit carrying more than six passengers for hire are exempted from inspections when evidence of a current Coast Guard certificate of inspection is presented. Owners of vessels failing the vessel inspection shall have thirty days to correct deficiencies and complete the inspection. Failure to do so will preclude re-issuance of the use permit or be cause for rejection of the application for mooring. The department may extend the deadline for correction of deficiencies for hardship. Owners of vessels that fail the vessel inspection may contest the decision before an arbitration board. See the full version of the rule for details.

RECONSTRUCTED VESSELS

According to **HAR §13-231-45**, a marine survey is required for all vessels that have undergone substantial reconstruction, alteration or modification. The rule also states that protection and indemnity insurance for the reconstructed, altered, or modified vessel in an amount no less than \$100,000 and naming the State as additionally insured is required in addition to a marine survey. No modification or alteration to a houseboat moored in Keehi Lagoon which changes the length, beam or size of silhouette area from that which existed at the time of issuance of the initial mooring permit shall be allowed without prior approval of the department.

LOADING AND DISCHARGING PASSENGERS IN A SMALL BOAT HARBOR

HAR §13-231-57 No commercial vessel shall load or discharge passengers or cargo or engage in any other commercial activity at any small boat harbor unless the owner possesses a regular mooring permit and a valid commercial use permit or valid catamaran registration certificate issued by the department.

Inter-island ferry service within Maui County shall be afforded preferential consideration per **HRS 200-9(d)**.

Except for Ala Wai and Keehi small boat harbors, the department may authorize the owner of a transient or visiting commercial vessel to:

- carry passengers for hire in the small boat harbors if the vessel is engaged in a fishing tournament,
- off-load and load passengers in the small boat harbors if those passengers are embarked elsewhere or bound for another destination; provided that a reservation for a berth was made in advance and space is available,
- embark and disembark passengers occasionally and infrequently, not exceeding twenty-four times in a calendar year on a special charter when approved not less than seven days in advance of the voyage.

A commercial use permit or catamaran registration certificate shall automatically expire the department's notice to vacate, if any vessel granted a temporary mooring permit engages in a trade or business contrary to the provisions of the permit or certificate.

LAHAINA SBH OPERATIONAL LIMITATION

No vessel of any size will be allowed to moor on the makai side of the Lahaina loading (fuel) dock from sunset to sunrise per **HAR §13-231-46**. This limitation is due to the restricted entrance and turning area in Lahaina small boat harbor. Mooring from sunrise to sunset will be limited to fifteen minutes.

OPERATION IN ALA WAI CANAL

HAR §13-231-77 Operation of vessels in Ala Wai canal shall be accomplished in a manner that will not create a nuisance to area residents.

LIMITS ON NUMBER OF PERMITS PER HARBOR

HAR §13-231-58 outlines the number of commercial use permits and catamaran registration certificates for vessels assigned permanent moorings in DLNR/DOBOR facilities and details restrictions. See the complete text for details.

HAR §13-231-59 sets limits on commercial use permits for vessels moored elsewhere (VME) and details restrictions. See the complete text for details.

HOW COMMERCIAL PERMITS AND CATAMARAN CERTIFICATES ARE ALLOCATED

HAR §13-231-60 Commercial use permits and catamaran registration certificates are issued to qualified applicants in the order in which applications are received by the department. Seniority begins on the date an application is received and accepted by the department. The allocation procedures specified in subchapter 5, Allocation of berths, **HAR §13-231-80** shall also govern the allocation of commercial use permits and catamaran registration certificates under this section.

The sale or transfer of any corporation or other business entity while on the waiting list which results in a change of the majority stockholder or person holding the majority interest in the business shall result in loss of seniority.

The department may reject an application for a commercial use permit if the type of commercial activity is determined by the department to be inappropriate for the facility or area for which the permit is being requested. Additional grounds for rejection are listed in **HAR §13-231-82**.

REISSUANCE OF COMMERCIAL PERMITS AND CATAMARAN CERTIFICATES

HAR §13-231-61 The department may reissue a commercial use permit or catamaran registration certificate under specific conditions. See the full text of this rule for details on fees for bare boat charters, six-pax vessels, vessels carrying up to and over 99 passengers, and water sports equipment rental businesses.

TRANSFERABILITY OF COMMERCIAL PERMITS AND CATAMARAN CERTIFICATES

HAR §13-231-62 details conditions for transferring commercial permits and registration certificates. See the full text of this rule for details.

RETENTION OF BERTH UPON TERMINATION OF COMMERCIAL PERMIT OR CATAMARAN CERTIFICATE

HAR §13-231-63 It is possible for a vessel to retain its berth in a harbor after its commercial use permit or catamaran registration certificate has been cancelled at the owner's request. See the full text of this rule for details.

FEES

HAR §13-234 Fees and charges for mooring rates, vessels absent for more than 14 days, for non-residents, stay-aboard or principal habitation, use of on-site showers, storage, lockers, etc. are detailed in this HAR. **HAR §13-234** also provides details on how to make payment, security deposits, delinquency, etc. Refer to the full text of this rule for the current information at:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/files/2023/01/190823-13-234-13-253-Standard-for-Public-Distribution.pdf>

APPLICATION FEE FOR MOORAGE - NO BERTHS AVAILABLE

HAR §13-234-23 If all suitable berths in a small boat harbor have been allocated to others, a person may apply, subject to the payment of application fees, for a future vacancy or to move in the future to another berth in the same harbor. If any applicant applies for or renews applications for more than one category of berth, a separate application fee or fee for renewal of an existing application shall be charged for each additional category.

Fees are specified. Refer to the full text of the rule for details.

No application for moorage, renewal of such application, or for berth transfer shall be accepted until the applicant has paid the prescribed fee. The fee is not refundable if the department rejects the applicant's application or a renewal.

FEE FOR RESIDENCY STATUS APPEAL - REFUND IF STATUS DETERMINATION REVERSED

HAR §13-234-24 The fee for filing an appeal concerning classification shall be fifteen dollars. This fee shall be promptly refunded if the department reverses its original determination that the petitioner was a nonresident.

FEES FOR COMMERCIAL USE PERMITS

HAR §13-234-25 Fees and charges that are related to commercial use of state boating facilities, waters of the State, and navigable streams. These fees may apply even if the commercial vessel is housed in a private marina or a harbor that is not managed by DLNR/DOBOR.

FEE (MONTHLY) FOR COMMERCIAL USE OF BOATING FACILITIES

HAR §13-234-31 The monthly fee for commercial use of state launching ramps, wharves, or other state boating facilities, except state small boat harbors, shall be the same as prescribed in **HAR §13-234-25 (a) (2)**. The single fee assessed for the use of a state launching ramp shall

entitle the permittee to use any other state launching ramp on the same island without additional charge, except for those launching ramps listed in **HAR §13-231-67**.

FEE (ANNUAL) FOR USE OF STATE BOAT LAUNCHING RAMPS

HAR §13-234-34 An annual boat ramp decal user fee of seventy-five dollars shall be paid by owners of trailered vessels using facilities under the jurisdiction of DOBOR.

The department shall provide an owner with a set of decals for the trailer upon payment of the fee required by this section. Current boat ramp decals shall be affixed to each side of the forward end of the trailer tongue whenever the vessel trailer is operated or stored at a DLNR/DOBOR facility.

A boat dealer or manufacturer shall be allowed to place a ramp decal on the dashboard of the vehicle used to transport a demonstration vessel.

PASSENGER FEES

HAR §13-234-26 explains and sets passenger fees for cruise vessels that do not have a valid mooring permit and uses State small boat harbors, property and facilities for embarking and disembarking passengers.

VESSEL INSPECTION FEE

HAR §13-234-29 For a vessel inspection performed by the department prior to the issuance or reissuance of a regular mooring permit, there shall be a non-refundable fee of forty dollars for each vessel to be inspected. The inspection shall be valid for two years. A vessel owner shall make an appointment with a harbor agent of the department not less than five working days prior to the date that the vessel is to be inspected. A fee of twenty dollars shall be charged if notice of cancellation by the vessel owner is not given to the harbor agent prior to the scheduled inspection. The inspection fee for vessels exempt from numbering pursuant to **HAR §13-241-2** and for open skiffs and dinghies less than thirteen feet in length shall be ten dollars.

NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS - SERVICE CHARGE

HAR §13-234-28 The service charge for any dishonored check, draft, certificate of deposit, or other negotiable instrument is twenty-five dollars.

SMALL BOAT HARBOR FACILITY KEY DEPOSITS

HAR §13-234-32 Each permittee with a valid regular mooring permit or temporary mooring permit authorized to secure a shower facility key shall deposit fifty dollars with the department as security for prompt return of the key upon termination or expiration of their use permit.

This rule provides a list of fees for keys for security gates and restrooms.

Payments of key deposits under this section shall be forfeited in the event the permittee does not return the key to the department on or before the termination of permittee's use permit or when the permittee is required to replace a key which has been lost or stolen.

FEES FOR SIGNS AND TICKET BOOTHS

HAR §13-234-35 The fee for commercial signs posted in state small boat harbors shall be assessed monthly as follows:

- Five dollars for each sign five square feet in size or smaller,
- One dollar per square foot for signs larger than five square feet, rounded to the nearest whole number.

The fee for ticket booths in small boat harbors shall be two hundred fifty dollars per month.

WATER TAXI OPERATIONS

HAR §13-231-70 allows for operation of water taxi service in all small boat harbors provided that the owner/operator shall possess a valid commercial use permit. See the full text of the rule for details.

HARBOR CLOSURES FOR HURRICANE AND TSUNAMI

Harbor offices may close and access to DLNR/DOBOR facilities may be restricted when there is threat of a hurricane or a tsunami. Every boater should have a personalized plan of action for these types of events and should be able to implement them without assistance from harbor staff. As the time of arrival for a hurricane or tsunami approaches, DLNR/DOBOR will follow shutdown and staff evacuation procedures posted at:

<https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dobor/contacts/Plan-HURRICANE.pdf>

<https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dobor/contacts/Plan-TSUNAMI.pdf>

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

The DOBOR web site features a page with emergency contact numbers for various situations. You can access this information at:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dobor/contact/emergency-contacts/>

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

The DLNRTip app and tip411 are completely anonymous – the technology removes all identifying information before officers see tips. There is no way to identify senders. DLNRTip is available for download for free via the Google Play Store, iTunes App Store, or by visiting the DOCARE website at dlnr.hawaii.gov/docare.

People without a smartphone can send an anonymous text tip via their cell phone to DOCARE by texting keyword DLNRTIP and their message/tip to 847411 (tip411). Anonymous tips can also be submitted through the DOCARE website and the Statewide Hotline at 643-DLNR.

WHERE TO FIND ADDITION INFORMATION

Refer to the [Harbor Tenant Handbook](#) for information on use of common areas, vehicular parking, parking permits, fire safety, smoking, use of showers, washdown areas, definitions of terms, etc. As a commercial harbor tenant, both the Harbor and Commercial Harbor Tenant Handbooks are valuable guides.