

Georgia Estuarine (Marine) Anchoring Law

In order to protect and enhance the quality of the waters of estuarine areas along the Georgia coast, state law prohibits long-term anchoring of a vessel in these areas without first obtaining a Long-Term Anchoring Permit from the department ([HB 833](#)). Short-term anchoring is allowed in an anchorage restriction area as long as the vessel is not anchored overnight. Exceptions to this would be for fishing or other similar activities.

The owner of a vessel is allowed to dock at a private recreational dock as long as the vessel is not utilized as a live-aboard vessel. Vessels are also allowed the ability to seek safe harbor in the event of dangerous weather or mechanical failure for a maximum of seven days.

These new anchoring provisions will ensure clean water surrounds Georgia's shellfish harvest areas and prevent overcrowding near marinas and private docks. At the same time, they afford boaters, both visiting transient and long-term, the ability to anchor in some of the nation's most picturesque natural areas - that is coastal Georgia.

The following are specifically excluded as anchoring areas under a Long-Term Anchoring Permit.

1. Within any marked navigation channel.
2. Within any approved shellfish growing areas and designated public harvest areas as determined by the department.
3. Within any marine structure.
4. At or near a blind point or curve so as not to be visible to passing vessels from a safe distance.

Definitions

- Anchorage restrictions areas: areas within the estuarine areas of this state in any location that lies within 300 feet of a marina, 150 feet from a marine structure other than a marina, or within 500 feet of approved shellfish growing areas and designated public harvest areas as determined by the department.
- Estuarine areas: all tidally influenced waters, marshes, and marshlands lying within a tide-elevation range from 5.6 feet above mean tide level and below.
- Short – Term: anchoring a vessel within a 5,280-foot radius (1 mile) of a documented anchoring point where a vessel is anchored for up to and including 14 cumulative days in a calendar year.
- Long – Term: anchoring a vessel within a 5,280-foot radius (1 mile) of a documented anchoring point where a vessel is anchored for over 14 cumulative days in a calendar year.
- Marina: a facility that provides fuel, public dockage, public dinghy access, sale of goods or merchandise, vessel maintenance, or marine services.
- Marine Structure: a public or private dock, pier, bridge, or wharf, Marine structures include, but are not limited to, marinas, boat ramps, boatyards, or other vessel launching or loading facilities.
- Live-aboard vessel: a floating vessel or other watercraft capable of safe; navigation using mechanical means, sails, oars, or other means of propulsion which is utilized primarily as a residence.
- Overnight: all consecutive hours between the hours of 30 minutes after sunset and 30 minutes before sunrise.

Resources

[Long-Term Anchoring Application](#)

Please complete, sign, and email the form to jamie.hawkins@dnr.ga.gov.

[Liveaboard Anchoring Illustrative Map](#)