

Dry Tortugas National Park

Boat Permits and Moorings Buoys



Boat permits are now required for all vessels in the park, including the RNA. The only vessels exempt from this rule are those transiting the area without interruption. Vessels may only anchor overnight on sandy bottom within one nautical mile of the Garden Key Harbor Light. Within the RNA, vessels may use one of the seven recreational mooring buoys for day use only. See information below on how to obtain a permit and how to use a Dry Tortugas mooring buoy.

Why Are Permits Necessary?

Permits are necessary to provide increased protection to the visitor, the Research Natural Area (RNA), and other marine resources outside of the RNA. Permits allow park staff to provide reliable information to the public about appropriate RNA visitation, provide the park managers reliable information about public use, increase the safety of the boating public by providing increased staff contact, and assist in monitoring recreational mooring buoy use to articulate carrying capacity.

Boating permits apply to all recreational vessels including kayaks and dinghies, vessels operating under a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA), and commercial fishing vessels. Vessels greater than 50 meters are required to have a Special Use Authorization in addition to the boating permit.

NOTE: A permit does not apply to vessels simply transiting through the park.

How and Where To Obtain a Permit

Boating Permits are free and can be obtained in person. A visitor can obtain a permit in person at the Garden Key Visitor Center or Park Headquarters Office. Visitors will also receive information regarding the Research Natural Area as well as park rules and regulations.

Coming Soon: In the future, permits will be available on the Dry Tortugas National Park Web Site at www.nps.gov/drto and at the ECO-Discovery Center in Key West, 33 East Quay Road, Key West, FL; (305) 809-4750.

Mooring Buoy Locations and Approved Activities

LMBSE: N24° 37.833 W82° 55.187 Use for access to Loggerhead Key, Visit Historic Structures, Swimming, Research, Education

LMBSW: N24° 37.8031 W82° 55.546 Use for access to Loggerhead Key, Visit Historic Structures, Snorkeling, Swimming, Research, Education

RNAMB1/Windjammer: N24° 37.413 W82° 56.548 Scuba Diving, Snorkeling, Swimming RNAMB2/The Maze: N24° 36.600 W82° 56.914 Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB3/Davis Rock: N24° 41.209 W82° 54.440 Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB4/Texas Rock: N24° 40.820 W82° 53.125 Scuba Diving, Swimming

RNAMB5/Off Ramp: N 24 40.156 W 82 54.506 Scuba Diving, Snorkeling, Swimming

How to Properly and Safely Use Mooring Buoys

- Approach slowly from downwind/current
- To secure your boat to the mooring, run your line from a cleat on your boat through the loop in the end of the mooring pick up line and back to a cleat on your boat.
- Use sufficient scope (rope length) to minimize pull on the anchor. Rule of thumb, if the buoy is being pulled underwater increase the scope. If there is an upward pull on the mooring increase the scope.
- Sailboats should not leave sails up when they are tied to a mooring,

- You are responsible for your vessel. Inspect the buoy. Check that the buoy is holding as intended. Report any problems to NPS staff. It is recommended to leave someone on the vessel at all times.
- The mooring is designed to hold up to a 100 foot recreational vessel. It is intended to be used when weather and sea conditions are appropriate for the intended recreational use such as diving or snorkeling. It is not intended for use in all wheather and sea conditions nor as a long term mooring.

Additional Information

- Mooring buoys are for DAY USE ONLY. No overnight stays on buoys are permitted.
- Vessels are limited to 2 hours at a time on a mooring buoy.
- Tampering with shipwrecks and other submerged cultural resources is prohibited. Moving or removing artifacts is a federal offense.

A complete list of Rules and Regulations can be found at Park Headquarters on Garden Key or online at www.nps.gov/drto. Please be sure to pick up information about the Research Natural Area (RNA), other Park Rules and Fishing Regulations prior to your day use within the park.

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