

Stocking Fish into Public or Private Waters Rules & Requirements



If you are thinking of purchasing fish to stock in a private pond or release into public waters, please be aware of **NEW rules*** passed in February 2018 regulating private fish stocking activities.

- No fish may be stocked into public waters without a permit issued by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department (VTFWD).
- Private ponds may be stocked without a permit provided they are stocked with brook trout, brown trout, or rainbow trout, and in numbers not exceeding 4,000 fish per pond per year. The fish must be obtained from sources approved by VTFWD.

Definitions

"Public Waters" means all rivers, streams, creeks, brooks, reservoirs, ponds, lakes, springs, and all bodies of surface waters, artificial or natural, which are contained within, flow through or border upon the State or any portion of it, as defined by *10 VSA §1251 (13)*.

"Private Pond" means a body of standing water that is a natural water body of not more than 20 acres located on property owned by one person, or an artificial water body of any size located on property owned by one person, as defined by *10 VSA §1442 (14)*.

**New stocking fish rules: 10 V.S.A §4605 Placing Fish in Waters, and Commissioner's Rule - Private Stocking of Fish in Public and Private Waters*

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I catch my own fish and move them to my pond?

No, Vermont fishing regulations prohibit the transfer of live fish from state waters.

Where can I get fish?

VTFWD maintains a list of private trout hatcheries that have been inspected and approved as sources where the public can purchase fish. The approved sources can be found at vtfishandwildlife.com

How do I apply for a permit?

Email Tom.Jones@vermont.gov or call 802-828-1000 to request a permit application.

Why are there rules on stocking fish?

Private stocking can provide fun fishing opportunities close to home, but it also has the potential to impact the health of Vermont's native fish populations and aquatic ecosystems. Stocked fish may compete with wild fish, introduce fish diseases or parasites, and interfere with ongoing fisheries research and management efforts.

For more information on pond stocking, please call 802-828-1000 or visit vtfishandwildlife.com.

