

## SCUBA Permit Frequently Asked Questions:

1/17/2019

Why do I need a SCUBA permit from the MPRB? The MPRB is primarily using SCUBA permits as an opportunity to educate divers about aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels. Since some Minneapolis lakes are infested with zebra mussels while others are not, it is important to plan diving trips accordingly and limit the potential of infesting new lakes with contaminated SCUBA diving equipment.

Can SCUBA gear really spread aquatic invasive species? Yes. Most aquatic invasive species, including zebra mussels, are capable of transferring from one waterbody to another in very small amounts of water. AIS could hitch a ride from one lake to another in buoyancy compensators, regulations, wetsuits or any other water-containing equipment if they are not completely drained before leaving a lake. When possible, dive equipment should not only be drained, but also dried for five days before moving from one lake to another.

What waterbodies do I need a SCUBA permit to visit? A MPRB SCUBA permit is needed to dive at all Minneapolis waterbodies, regardless of their size.

What is the cost of a SCUBA permit? There is no cost associated with a MPRB SCUBA permit.

How often do I need to obtain a SCUBA permit? You only need to apply for one SCUBA permit from the MPRB each calendar year, regardless of how much diving you will be doing.

Do I need to obtain multiple SCUBA permits if I plan to visit multiple different MPRB waterbodies in a year or visit the same MPRB waterbody multiple times throughout one year? No. A single SCUBA permit will entitle you to unlimited diving at MPRB waterbodies during the calendar year that the permit is issued.

Which aquatic invasive species are currently found in MPRB waterbodies? As of January 2019, invasive Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and common carp are well-established throughout MPRB waterbodies. Lake Harriet, Lake Nokomis, Bde Maka Ska (Lake Calhoun), and Lake Hiawatha are all designated as infested for zebra mussels, although zebra mussels can only be readily found in Lake Hiawatha. New invaders such as starry stonewort and spiny water fleas are expanding their ranges across Minnesota and have not yet been found in any Minneapolis waterbody. An up-to-date infested waters list is maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [here](#).

Can I ask an MPRB watercraft inspector to help me inspect my SCUBA gear? Certainly! The MPRB watercraft inspectors are happy to provide courtesy inspections of your SCUBA gear, even if you do not plan to enter the lake at the public boat ramp or if you plan to SCUBA dive on a different lake altogether.

You can find MPRB watercraft inspectors at the Bde Maka Ska, Lake Harriet, and Lake Nokomis public boat launches during the times listed [here](#).

Isn't the spread of aquatic invasive species inevitable? According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, several states in the United States have implemented successful AIS inspection and education programs that have dramatically slowed or even stopped the spread of new species. Once a new AIS enters a waterbody, management of that species is often extremely expensive or not even possible. Education and inspection programs are the most valuable tools we have to limit the spread of these environmentally and economically-damaging species.

Does the MPRB have any other SCUBA diving rules that I should know about? While the MPRB doesn't have a formal set of SCUBA diving rules itself, it is expected that you will adhere to all other local, state, and federal SCUBA regulations while visiting MPRB waterbodies.

Can I help the MPRB by looking for new infestations while I SCUBA dive? Yes! If you suspect that you may have found a new infestation of any aquatic invasive species in a previously uninfested lake, make a note of your location and then take a specimen to a MPRB watercraft inspector at the Bde Maka Ska, Lake Harriet, or Lake Nokomis boat launch.