

Guidelines for Piers for Historic Vessels

Prepared by the North River Historic Ship Society

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Piers designed for accommodating historic and or educational vessels, including visiting tall ships and educational vessels need several elements included in their basic design. The table below summarizes these elements in order of importance. Without these things, an historic ship cannot function as it needs to for educational and other programming purposes onboard.

The best recommendation is that the developer of a pier intended for vessels engage maritime experts including engineers but also captains and vessel owners/operators, to insure that the design actually is capable of functioning as intended.

The table below is just a guide. The North River Historic Ship Society can assist a developer in helping to create more detailed specifications.

Item	Description	Note	Priority
Pier shape	Pier should have straight sides and ends so as to accommodate as many vessels as possible.	Curves, indentations and other odd shapes should be avoided. Piers should also be level. Piers that ramp up or change height should be avoided.	Very high
Pier strength	Pier should be designed to dock a variety of vessels including large tall ships.	Many historic vessels are smaller, but some visiting vessels (such as <i>Eagle</i>) are very large.	Very high
Fendering	Pier should be surrounded by a substantial number of strong fender piles with frequent spacing.	These are both for the protection of the pier (including ice) as well as vessels berthed alongside.	Very high
Bollards	Cleats and bollards should be placed frequently around the perimeter of the pier.	This is a basic requirement. A combination of large bollards mixed with intermediate size cleats works best.	Very high
Safety	There should be an emergency access ladder at several intervals to assist the rescue of a person in the water.	This is a life saving requirement. In addition there should be throw-able life rings available.	Very high
Rail	If there must be a rail, it should be set back several feet from the edge of the pier and inboard of any cleats/bollards.	This is to allow space for line handling, loading ramps and deliveries.	High
Rail openings	If there must be a rail, rail openings (gates) must be frequent and/or of a flexible design.	Every vessel has different loading capabilities as well as different lengths. It is impossible to predict in advance for all situations, thus flexibility is key.	High
Electricity	Electric service should be available at frequent intervals, in a variety of voltages & configurations.	Without electricity, vessels would need to run onboard generators, potentially creating local pollution and noise.	High
Water	A water supply (hose outlet) should be provided near each berthing location.	A basic necessity of all vessels.	Desirable
Sewage	A means for a vessel to discharge sewage should be provided.	This is simply a connection to the sewage system.	Desirable
Vehicle access	There should be a way for vehicles to get close to vessels for normal service, not to mention emergency situations.	Supplies need to be brought onboard for programming, maintenance and renovation. And groups of disabled people can't always access historic vessels without some type of vehicle.	Desirable
Float	A portion of the pier should be equipped with a float and ramp.	This is for smaller vessels including works boats for larger vessels, as well as for water taxis.	Desirable
Other amenities	Provisions for telephone and other services would be helpful.	A dockmasters's office would be great. Additionally, facilities for visitors, such a public restrooms, water fountains and the like should be considered, plus a bulletin board or kiosk for posting vessel information and schedules.	Desirable/ Optional

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