

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 Utility	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
Water Depth	There need to be consideration of sufficient water depth to permit navigation	The very best designed pier will be useless if vessels cannot dock due to shallow water.	Very High
Wake Protection	Wake protection must be provided where wakes are prevalent	As vessel traffic increases, especially for water-borne commuters and other waterfront users, wake will continue to be a major problem. Consideration must be given to wake-reduction measures as well.	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
Float	A portion of the pier should be equipped with a float and ramp.	This is for smaller vessels including many historic/educational schooners, works boats for larger vessels, as well as for water taxis.	High
Electricity & Water	Electric service should be available at frequent intervals, in a variety of voltages & configurations, plus water supply	Without electricity, vessels would need to run onboard generators, potentially creating local pollution and noise. Water is a basic necessity.	High
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
Other amenities	Provisions for telephone and other services would be helpful.	A dockmasters' office would be great. Additionally, facilities for visitors, such as public restrooms, water fountains and the like should be considered, plus a bulletin board or kiosk for posting vessel info.	Desirable/ Optional

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