

Protecting Wisconsin Consumers for 75 Years

Warehouse storage

When storing your property, including boats, pontoons, RV's, and motorcycles, **protection from theft or damage** should be your primary concern, says the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Bureau of Business Trade Practices, which regulates licensed facilities (Wis. Statute Chapter 99).

Consumers should ask storage operators if they are licensed by DATCP as Public Warehouse Keepers. Most dealerships and marinas are licensed and permits are prominently posted. Outdoor storage areas and a farmer's barn may also be required to be licensed. Licensed operators offer you the greatest protection because they are bonded and regularly inspected. Ask to see their license.

What about an unlicensed storage facility?

- Remember they are not bonded or inspected by the Department.
- Ask the operator of the storage facility, licensed or unlicensed, for a contract in writing.

- Insist that the contract state the terms and the operator's legal liability.
- Read the contract before you sign it.
- Inspect the area where your property will be stored.
- Ask the operator of the facility who has access to the storage area.

Self-service storage facilities

A mini warehouse or self-service storage facility is storage space rented to tenants, usually on a monthly basis. A self-service storage business provides space in which tenants can store and access their goods. Unlike public warehouse keepers, self-service storage facilities are not required to be licensed.

These facilities must inform the renter that the owner holds a lien on the property being stored. The operators, renting the storage area to you, can recover their money by selling your goods if rental payments are not made. You may be considered in default just seven days after the rental payment is due (Wis. Statute Chapter 704.90 – Self-service storage facilities).

Usually boats, pontoons, RV and motorcycle owners are required to carry insurance on their property while in storage. Examine your insurance coverage carefully and ask the storage facility about its liability.

In Wisconsin, your boat, pontoons, RV's and motorcycles can spend more time in storage than on lakes or roads. **Protect your investment, by using a licensed storage facility.**

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact the Bureau of Business Trade Practices.

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