

BLUE-FLAG CRITERIA

A beach must be accessible to all (regardless of age, gender, political views, religion)

Each beach must provide at least five environmental education activities to the public, preferably during its Blue Flag season. Each beach must have at least one **Blue Flag information board** in place, containing all the information required by the criteria listed below. For long beaches, it is recommended that more than one Blue Flag information boards are installed (approximately one **every 500 metres**). All Blue Flag information boards must follow national standards with respect to information, content and design. These Blue Flag information boards must be in place at all Blue Flag beaches.

Criterion 1. Information about the Blue Flag Programme must be displayed.

Criterion 2. Environmental education activities must be offered and promoted to beach users. At least five different activities must be offered to the municipality or community - preferably during the Blue Flag season. The activities should focus on the environment, environmental issues, Blue Flag issues or sustainability issues. At least some of the activities should be carried out at the beach and have a direct focus on the beach environment. (see Appendix C for activities)

Criterion 3. Information about bathing water quality must be displayed.

Criterion 4. Information relating to local eco-systems, environmental elements and cultural sites must be displayed.

Criterion 5. A map of the beach indicating different facilities must be displayed.

- lifeguards or lifesaving equipment
- the area patrolled (for beaches with lifeguards)
- first aid
- toilets (including toilets for disabled people)
- drinking water
- bicycle parking areas
- recycling facilities
- location of water sampling point(s)
- access points and access for disabled persons
- zoning (swimming, surfing, sailing, boating, etc.) where applicable
- nearby public transport
- demarcation of Blue Flag area
- location of other information boards
- local landmarks (where applicable)
- nearby sensitive natural areas, etc.
- direction (North)

Criterion 6. A code of conduct that reflects appropriate laws and/or regulations governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas must be displayed. The code of conduct must include rules about the presence of domestic animals, zoning (when appropriate), fishing, litter management, the use of vehicles, camping, fires, etc.

➡ WATER QUALITY

The Blue Flag Programme requires that beaches achieve Excellent bathing water quality. The bathing water quality standards have been based on the most appropriate international and national standards and legislation.

Criterion 7. The beach must fully comply with the water quality sampling and frequency requirements.

Criterion 8. The beach must fully comply with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis.

Criterion 9. Industrial, waste-water or sewage-related discharges must not affect the beach area.

➡ ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Criterion 14. Sensitive areas must be managed.

Criterion 15. The beach must be clean.

Criterion 16. Algal vegetation or natural debris must be left on the beach.

Criterion 17. Waste disposal bins/containers must be available at the beach in adequate numbers, and they must be regularly maintained. In summary, when choosing and locating bins, the following factors should be considered:

- Bin capacity.
- Environmentally friendly products.
- Type and source of litter.
- Volume of pedestrian traffic.
- Servicing methods and intervals (including peak times).
- Local environment, e.g. winds, high tides, scavenging seagulls.
- Accessibility, e.g. height, surface.

Criterion 18. Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste materials must be available at the beach.

Criterion 19. An adequate number of toilet or restroom facilities must be provided. The water consumption in the sanitary facilities and showers must be controlled.

Criterion 20. The toilet or restroom facilities must be kept clean.

Criterion 21. The toilet or restroom facilities must have controlled sewage disposal.

There must be an environmental policy and an environmental plan for the beach. The plan should include references to water management, waste and energy consumption, health and safety issues as well as the use of environmentally friendly products wherever possible. All employees must be informed and educated about these issues.

Only environmentally friendly cleaning products (which are certified with an ecolabel) must be used for the cleaning of the facilities on the beach.

Only environmentally-friendly toiletries, paper towels and toilet papers must be provided in the sanitary facilities on the beach. Soap and other personal care products must be provided in dispensers with a dosing system.

Only energy-efficient lighting must be used. Sensors which regulate the use of the light should be installed wherever considered as being useful.

The energy supply on the beach should be based on renewable sources.

The beach and beach equipment/facilities should aim at being climate neutral.

Artificially made green areas and gardens on the beach must be maintained sustainably (when planting new green areas, endemic or native species are used; collecting rainwater is recommended)

Criterion 23. Access to the beach by dogs and other domestic animals must be strictly controlled.

Criterion 26. A sustainable means of transportation should be promoted in the beach area.

➡ SAFETY AND SERVICES

Criterion 28. First aid equipment must be available on the beach.

Criterion 29. Emergency plans to cope with pollution risks must be in place.

Criterion 30. There must be management of different users and uses of the beach so as to prevent conflicts and accidents.

Criterion 31. There must be safety measures in place to protect users of the beach, and free access must be granted to the public.

Criterion 32. A supply of drinking water should be available at the beach.

Criterion 33. At least one Blue Flag beach in each municipality must have access and facilities provided for the physically disabled.