

THE BLUE FLAG



eco-label for beaches and marinas



The Foundation for Environmental Education

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The Blue Flag Programme

The Blue Flag Programme is a voluntary eco-label for beaches and marinas. The programme is run by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), a non profit non governmental organisation with member organisations in 49 countries as of June 2007. The Blue Flag Programme started in Europe in 1987 with the purpose of encouraging beaches to comply with the EU Bathing Water Directive. The Programme criteria have since developed to address a wide range of environmental and safety issues. The number of participating countries and of beaches and marinas receiving the award has increased yearly.

The Blue Flag is given to beaches and marinas that meet a specific set of criteria concerning environmental information and education, water quality, safety and services and environmental management. It has become a symbol of quality recognised by tourists and tour operators and can be used for the promotion of the awarded beach or marina.

The programme is designed to raise environmental awareness and increase good environmental practices among tourists, local populations and beach and marina management and staff. The programme criteria are also designed to work with the national, regional and local legislation of each country, thereby assuring that the legislation is being followed. It can also be used to set a benchmark higher than what already exists.

As of 2007 there were over 3200 sites awarded with the Blue Flag in 37 countries including countries in Europe, in the Caribbean, Morocco, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa.

Current information about participating countries and awarded sites can be found on the website www.blueflag.org.

Other programmes run by FEE

- Eco-Schools
- Young Reporters for the Environment
- Learning About Forests
- Green Key

Programme Criteria Areas

- Environmental Education and Information
- Water Quality
- Environmental Management
- Safety and Services

Blue Flag Beach Programme

The criteria for the Blue Flag Beach Programme have developed over the years to become more holistic and to address the various issues of sustainability. The criteria are designated as either imperative or guideline, or not applicable for certain regions. The main criteria are:

Environmental Education and Information

- Information about coastal zone eco-systems and nearby sensitive areas must be displayed
- Information about bathing water quality must be posted
- A code of conduct for the beach area must be displayed
- A minimum of 5 environmental education activities must be offered

Water Quality

- Compliance with standards for excellent bathing water quality
- No industrial or sewage related discharges may affect the beach area
- Compliance of the community with requirements for sewage treatment and effluent quality

Environmental Management

- The beach must be clean
- Camping and driving must be regulated
- A beach management committee must be established to be in charge of the environmental management system

Safety and Services

- Lifeguards and/or lifesaving equipment must be available at the beach
- A map of the beach indicating different facilities must be displayed
- An emergency plan to cope with pollution safety risks must be in place

For more information please visit: www.blueflag.org/Criteria/Beaches



Blue Flag Marina Programme

The criteria for the Blue Flag Marina Programme have also developed over time to become more demanding and to address issues within the broader context of sustainability. The criteria are either imperative or guideline. The main criteria are:

Environmental Education and Information

- Information about natural sensitive areas must be displayed
- A code of environmental conduct must be posted
- The marina must offer at least three environmental education activities to the users and staff of the marina
- The Individual Blue Flag for boat owners must be offered at the marina

Environmental Management

- An environmental policy and plan must be produced
- Adequate and well managed litterbins must be in place
- Recycling facilities must be offered
- Bilge and toilet pumping facilities must be present
- No pollution from boat washing/repair areas may enter the sewage system or natural surroundings

Safety and Services

- Adequate equipment for lifesaving, first-aid and fire-fighting must be in place
- An emergency plan to cope with pollution, fire or other accidents must be produced
- Safety precautions and information must be posted at the marina
- Facilities for disabled people must be in place
- Electricity and water facilities must be available at the berths
- A map indicating the location of the different facilities must be posted at the marina

Water Quality

- The water must be visually clean (no oil, litter, sewage or other evidence of pollution)

For more information please visit: www.blueflag.org/Criteria/Marinas



Blue Flag in a New Country

Getting Started

To establish the Blue Flag Programme in a new country a nationally active non-profit, non-governmental organisation must first become a member of the Foundation for Environmental Education. The organisation will be the national representative and responsible body for FEE in that country. This NGO should have environmental education as one of its aims, have the necessary resources available to run the programme, and meet other criteria set by FEE.

The Application Process

Interested organisations should contact the FEE secretariat and apply for associate membership. In the application they must demonstrate their capabilities and how they plan to run the Blue Flag Programme. They must also present a plan for how they will, within three years of becoming members, start running a second FEE programme. The new FEE member organisation will be assigned a mentor to instruct them through the first few years.

Developing the Blue Flag Programme

At the start of the Blue Flag Programme, a national information workshop must be held. Also a National Blue Flag Committee must be established, consisting of representatives from the national water-, tourism-, education- and environmental authorities. Other relevant experts and interest groups such as beach/marina associations and recreational groups should also be a part of the committee. The National Blue Flag Committee will review the international criteria and identify how they fit with their local legislation and situation. They will then choose one or more beaches or marinas to become the first Blue Flag pilot sites. These first pilot sites will serve as learning opportunities and examples for other beaches and marinas in the country. Once the pilot sites have successfully completed a season and they show to be in full compliance with the Blue Flag criteria, they can apply for the full Blue Flag status.

For more information about becoming a member of FEE (and starting any of the programmes) please visit: www.fee-international.org



Application Procedure for Beaches and Marinas

Initial Contact

Beaches and marinas which would like to apply for the Blue Flag award should first contact their national FEE organisation's Blue Flag operator. The national operators provide interested parties with the national Blue Flag application form and procedural instructions. A pre-application review of the applicant is sometimes done to help identify problem areas that could be improved.

The Selection Process

The National Jury meets once a year to review the candidates from that country and to decide if they are in compliance with all of the Blue Flag criteria. Approved candidates are then forwarded to the International Jury. The International Blue Flag Jury meets twice a year to review candidates from different areas of the world. Once the candidates have been accepted by the International Jury they are awarded with the Blue Flag for one season.

Control Visits

Control visits are made during the Blue Flag season by both national and international controllers to assure that all criteria are met. If problems are found the flag is withdrawn until these are fixed. If the problem is very serious or if it is not fixed within a given period of time, the flag is withdrawn for the rest of the season. The public is also encouraged to report any problems about Blue Flag beaches and marinas to the national and international Blue Flag contacts.



National Jury Composition

- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Tourism and/or National Tourism Association
- Association of Local Authorities
- National Sailing Association or other marina experts
- Association of beach/marina managers
- National lifesaving association
- Education experts
- Other NGOs
- Other experts

International Jury Composition

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- International Lifesaving Federation (ILS)
- International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA)
- World Conservation Union (IUCN)
- European Union for coastal Conservation (EUCC)
- Environmental Education Expert

Environmental Education

Each Blue Flag marina and beach are required to carry out three or five environmental education activities respectively. These activities should target different groups such as tourists, boat owners, staff, children or local populations. The activities can vary from drawing competitions to clean-up days, seminars, guided nature walks, publications etc. Here are a few examples:

Croatia - Landscapes and Nature

The Croatian Blue Flag organisation published unique brochures for each county, highlighting the natural characteristics of each. The brochures inform the public about the geography, plant and animal life of the counties, and also highlight the special protected areas in each county. They are written in both Croatian and English. The brochures were made in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, and the Ministry of the Sea, Tourism and Development.



Portugal – National Surveillance Programme

During the summer season, the Portuguese Blue Flag organisation involves young persons, ages 16 to 24, in controlling the Blue Flag beaches. Together they patrol the beaches, simultaneously learning about the coastal environment and assuring that the criteria are being followed. The activity is jointly coordinated by the Portuguese Blue Flag staff, the Portuguese National Youth Institute and the Scouts. Often representatives from local NGO's are also involved.



France – Recycling Competition

Children from primary schools and holiday centres can develop their hand working skills and imaginations by transforming paper into figurines. This activity explains, in an entertaining way, the life cycle of a product such as paper to increase their understanding about waste, recycling and reusing.



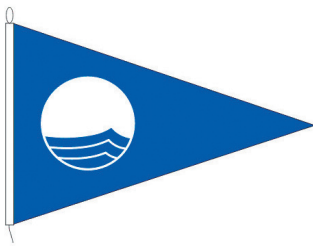
The Individual Blue Flag for Boat Owners

Individual commitment is one of the best ways to encourage good environmental practices. To stimulate this, the Individual Blue Flag was created for the use of boat owners. Boat owners can obtain the pennant at their local Blue Flag marina office or contact the National or the International Blue Flag coordinator. They can receive the Individual Blue Flag by signing a Code of Conduct.



The Code of Conduct contains such Statements as:

- I will not throw garbage into the sea or along the coast
- I will not release toilet water in the sea in coastal waters and sensitive areas
- I will deliver poisonous or toxic waste to the containers in the marina (e.g. oil, paint, used batteries, cleaning agents, etc.)
- I will promote and use recycling facilities (glass, paper, etc.)
- I will use the most environmentally friendly products among paints, antifouling, paint remover, detergents, etc.
- I will instantly report pollution or other violations of environmental regulations to the authorities
- I will not use forbidden fishing practices and I will respect periods when fishing is prohibited
- I will respect vulnerable and protected areas
- I will avoid damaging the sea bottom, e.g. in the way that I anchor
- I will not buy or use objects made from protected species or from archaeological underwater findings
- I will encourage other sailors also to take care of the environment



More information please visit:

www.blueflag.org/Criteria/BlueFlagforBoats



National Blue Flag contacts

Aruba	Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association
Bahamas	Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation
Belgium Bond	Beter Leefmilieu
Brazil	Instituto Ambiental Ratonos
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement
Canada	Environmental Defence Canada
Chile	Instituto de Ecología Política
Croatia	Pokret Prijatelja Prirode – “Lijepa Nasa”
Cyprus	Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association
Denmark	Friluftsrådet
Dominican Republic	Instituto de Derecho Ambiental de la Republica Dominicana
England and N. Ireland	ENCAMS
Estonia	Hoia Eesti Merd
Finland	Pidä Saaristo Siistinä ry
France	FEEE France
Germany	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Umwelterziehung
Greece	Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature
Iceland	Landvernd
Ireland	An Taisce
Italy	FEE Italia
Jamaica	Negril area Environmental Protection Trust
Latvia	FEE Latvia
Lithuania	Lietuvos Zaliuju Judejimas
Malta	Nature Trust Malta
Montenegro	Environmental Consultancy of Montenegro
Morocco	Fondation Mohammed VI pour la Protection de l'Environnement
Netherlands	FEE-N
New Zealand	FEE-NZ
Norway	FEE-Norway
Poland	Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation
Portugal	ABAE / FEE Portugal
Puerto Rico	Organizacion Pro Ambiente Sustentable
Romania	Central Carpato-Daunbian de Geoecologie
Russia	Keep Saint-Petersburg Tidy
Scotland	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Slovenia	DOVES / FEE Slovenia
South Africa	Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa
Spain	Asociación de Educación Ambiental y del Consumidor
Sweden	Håll Sverige Rent
Tunisia	Association Tunisienne pour la protection de la nature et de l'Environnement
Turkey	Türkiye Çevre Egitim Vakfi
Wales	Keep Wales Tidy

Blue Flag Sponsors

We would like to thank our corporate sponsors for their continued support which has made the development and expansion of the programme possible. Their support has contributed to the health of marine environments and the education and awareness of the world's people.

Beach Tech



www.beach-tech.com

Beach Trotters



www.beach-trotters.com

Blue Beach SafeBox Services



www.bluebeachsafebox.com

Boxen Media



www.boxenmedia.com

First Choice Holidays



www.firstchoice.co.uk

Shipmate



www.shipmate.nl

Blue Flag Partners

European Union

www.europa.eu.int

European Union for Coastal Conservation (EUCC)

www.eucc.net

International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA)

www.icomia.org

International Lifesaving Federation (ILS)

www.ilsf.org

Reef Check

www.reefscheck.org

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

www.unepie.org

The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

www.iucn.org

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

www.world-tourism.org

www.blueflag.org
www.fee-international.org

