

# Building an Information Board

The Blue Flag Information Board is a key component of meeting the criteria for award. It is both a visual representation of the program and key means of communication with the public. Below you will find a list compiled to help ensure you are including all the components necessary to avoid non-compliance. **Red** components indicate they are required to be on your board. **Blue** components indicate components may or may not apply to your site or are best practice to include.

The National Blue Flag USA program does not specify a specific size for information boards as each location has different rules for sizing, opportunities for incorporation of technology, and installation considerations. Sites may want to print out information board templates on paper at different sizes to ensure text is not too small. For comparison, boards in Canada are 6' wide x 4' high and boards in Germany are 5'x5'.

## Blue Flag Program-General Components

- **All Blue Flag information boards must follow national standards.**

**Text Boxes** in bold and Red CANNOT BE CHANGED. It has been standardized to limit non-compliance and provide a cohesive message at all Blue Flag Beaches across the United States and Internationally.

International Pictograms are provided for you by the National Operator for use with your map. These pictograms will be included in the document with their associated meanings.

The US national operator does not require information to be in specific places on your board, use of specific board materials, nor a specific size. We understand different locations may have sign ordinances or issues of vandalism requiring specific sign properties.

- **The correct Blue Flag logo must be used, in accordance with the FEE branding guidelines.**

The logo will be provided to you by the US national operator. The branding guidelines will also be provided but are essentially: Do Not Rotate the logo, Do Not Alter the ratio of the logo, Do Not Combine the logo with other elements, Do Not Change the Color of the logo, Minimum recommended size is 25 mm.

The Blue Flag Logo Color codes are:

RGB: 0 110 182 – for on screen use

PAN: 300 U – for flags or special prints

WEB: #0066CC – Only on Websites

CMYK: 100 46 – for printing

- **The length of the Blue Flag season must also be included.**

It is recommended the logo be placed on the top left corner and the season (months for which you have been awarded the flag) be placed in the top right corner.

- Contact details for the local, national and international Blue Flag representatives must be posted as well.

**International Contact information:**

**Foundation for Environmental Education**

**info@fee.global**

**Blueflag.global**

**National Operator contact information:**

**American Shore and Beach Preservation Association**

**blueflagusa@asbpa.org**

**Blueflag.us**

**{Beach Name} Blue Flag program coordinator:**

{your info here}

- Beach operating licenses and statutory permits posted on the information board.

If you have operating licenses or permits for managing and operating the beach, you will need to include these on your board.

- (Temporary) In the event the Blue Flag is temporarily withdrawn, a relevant notice must be posted at the beach informing the public as to the reasons why the flag was withdrawn

Relevant notices are not permanent features of your board and can cover a variety of beach management issues. However, there **Must** be space on the board where these notices can be posted. This could be done with cork board, white board, enclosed plexiglass, etc. It is recommended this area be near your water quality results as this is the most likely reason a notice would need to be posted.

## The Program

- The essence of each of the four categories of the Blue Flag criteria must be explained in this information

**{Beach Name} has received the Blue Flag Award. The Blue Flag is an international environmental award given to communities who fulfil a number of criteria covering water quality, environmental information and education, safety, services and facilities. This effort by local communities and beach operators ensures everyone can expect to visit clean and sustainably managed beaches across the United States and internationally.**

**The Blue Flag is awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), a non-governmental environmental organization which is represented by national organizations in**

each participating country. FEE also develops four other programs: Green Key, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment, and Learning about Forests. To learn more go to [www.fee.global](http://www.fee.global).

**The American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) is the U.S. Blue Flag Program National Operator. Founded in 1926, the ASBPA is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing our coasts by merging science and public policy. We advocate for healthy, sustainable and resilient coastal systems to sustain four interconnected core values provided by our nation's shores and beaches: community protection, a strong economy, ecologic health, and recreation. Visit [ASBPA.ORG](http://ASBPA.ORG).**

- It is recommended that if your community has an eco-school run by the National Wildlife Federation, information about the school is included.

## The Flag

- Explanation of what it means to not be flying the flag or not being in compliance.

**The Blue Flag award is presented annually for one season and is valid as long as all criteria are maintained. When criteria are not met during the season, the responsible authorities are required to take the Blue Flag down and post the reason. ASBPA monitors sites during their season. For more information and a full set of criteria visit: [blueflag.us](http://blueflag.us)**

## The Map

- good quality, easy to read and properly oriented
- Legend to include North direction indicator, you are here point, and scale bar
- Nearby sensitive natural areas, cultural sites, etc.
- Stormwater outlets
- Local landmarks
- Rivers and inflows
- Location of other information boards
- Demarcation of Blue Flag area
- footpaths
- Nearby public transport
- Zoning for swimming, surfing, sailing, etc.
- Access points and accesses for people with limited abilities
- Location of water sampling point(s)
- Recycling facilities
- Authorized camping at or near the beach
- Car and bicycle parking areas
- Drinking water

- ❑ Toilets (including toilets for people with limited abilities)
- ❑ telephones
- ❑ first aid equipment
- ❑ the area patrolled (for beaches with lifeguards)
- ❑ lifeguards or lifesaving equipment
- ❑ Information about sustainable transport to and around the beach

## Environmental Education Activities

- ❑ Preferably, the specific activities should be posted on the common information board

Sites are required to run 5 different environmental education activities, preferably during the Blue Flag Season. When these planned activities are provided to the public or beach users, the activities need to be publicized on the Blue Flag information board and other areas. We understand not all activities will occur every year or on the same date. Whatever the platform for dissemination is, it has to be stated on the information board where the user can find out more about the activities. Therefore, the following language should be used to indicate where more information is available to the public.

**The Blue Flag program supports educational activities aimed to increase awareness of the environment, ecology, and species of the coastal zone.** {insert any additional information} **Please call/contact/visit** {insert phone number, email, or website} **for more information on upcoming activities in the community.**

Activities can be posted on the board follow the following formats:

Table

| Activity | Dates | Contact Information |
|----------|-------|---------------------|
|          |       |                     |
|          |       |                     |

Flyers on a cork board

QR codes

Flyer or PDF in a plexiglass lock box

Or others.

## Water Quality

- ❑ Bathing water quality information must be displayed on the Blue Flag information board. It is recommended that a table or figure with easily identifiable symbols that corresponds to the results be used.
- ❑ The information must also clearly explain how the water quality results relate to the imperative criteria for water quality, with specific reference to sampling frequency and the conditions under which Blue Flag status can be withdrawn

- Language must be included explaining why the site sample frequency is different between microbiological parameters of e.coli and Enterrococci.

**Water quality at {beach name} is monitored {Frequency} times per week by {monitoring agency}. US Blue Flag criteria require beaches to monitor Enterrococci levels weekly and that these levels not exceed 100cfu/100ml or the state's microbiological limit, whichever is stricter, 95 percent of the season. Results are posted here weekly and online at {insert monitoring website/QR code etc.}.**

**E.Coli is monitored monthly to meet Blue Flag international standards. E.Coli levels must not exceed 250cfu/100ml 95 percent of the season.**

### **What do the Results Mean?**

**In the table you can see when the water has been analyzed and how many bacteria were found. A small number of bacteria indicates less likelihood of illness from contact with the water. A high number of bacteria indicates an increased risk of illness from contact with the water.**

{1. **Explain your table results** (did you use colors, smiley faces, ect). It is recommended if a local table or system is already being used you include the local table. If you do not have an easily identifiable table to use, we recommend using the following provided by Blue Flag International.

Beach: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Local authority: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Date  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Escherichiacoli / Faecal coliform</b>            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ☺<br>< 250cfu/100ml                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ☹<br>>250cfu/100 ml                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Intestinal Enterococci / Faecal streptococci</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ☺<br><100/100 ml                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ☹<br>>100/100 ml                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Faecal coliform / E.coli</b> | <b>Faecal streptococci / Intestinal enterococci</b> |
| ☺<br>Below 250                  | ☺<br>Below 100                                      |
| <i>Excellent bathing water</i>  |   |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| ☹️  | ☹️        |
| Above 250                                       | Above 100 |
| <i>Is allowed a few times during the season</i> |           |

2. [insert information](#) about local limits, advisories, red tides/HABs, etc.}

Sites should also include relevant information about additional national, state, or local water quality issues. For example, if your state issues HAB advisories in addition to water quality advisories, information for the public on HAB closures and reporting should be included.

## Environmental Management

- ☐ [Information about coastal zone ecosystems, wetland areas, unique habitats or any sensitive natural areas must be displayed at or close](#) to the Blue Flag beach. The information must include details about the natural area and a code of conduct for visitors to the area.

Here you should include a description of your beach environment, how you keep the beach clean, highlight sensitive ecosystems, sensitive species, and how visitors can respect these features and inhabitants. Consider including contact or informational info for injured wildlife, an invasive species, etc. The following are questions to help you populate this section:

- Do you have a sandy, rocky, or inland beach? Is your beach a barrier island?
  - Is there a protected species or habitat on or near my beach? Does your beach serve as a turtle nesting habitat? Are their birds nesting there?
  - Is there an invasive or non-native species public sightings could help with?
  - Are there interesting environmental areas near my site? A wetland area? A river?
  - Is there a management challenge you want to make the public aware of?
  - Have you done a renourishment project and want to keep the public off the dunes?
- ☐ If the full information is not available on the Blue Flag information board, [there must at least be a short notice on the board informing the public about the nearby sensitive areas and where they can find further information.](#)
  - ☐ [In the case of sensitive underwater environments, specific information about these areas must be provided for divers and snorkelers.](#)

If there is snorkeling or diving at the beach or at an underwater site nearby information should target these groups.

# Code of Conduct

- The beach code of conduct must be displayed on the Blue Flag information board. The information could furthermore be posted at other locations.
- 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.

The code of conduct is essentially a communities' beach ordinances and the specific Blue Flag Criteria on domestic animals, driving, camping, and fires. It is recommended communities use the same graphics used other places in the community and on other signs in the site to promote continuity of message. If graphics are needed, the international pictograms can be used.



Other common conduct items include:

- No Glass
- No tents in emergency lanes
- No Smoking
- Etc.

# Beach Safety and Services

- Emergency contact information is included on the board. At least 911 but can include health department, environmental species or habitat contacts, or pollution.



Saving Equipment

- Explanation of your safety flag system.
- Hours of operation for lifeguards, when safety equipment is provided, and when first aid is available must be included.
- Explanation of multi or single use zones. For example, you should explain the distinction between swimming, motor, paddle, or sail craft areas. Do you use flags? Is there a physical boundary between these activities?



Multiple Beach  
Activities



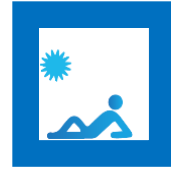
Surfing



Boating



Swimming



Sand Recreation

□ [Safety precautions can also be included on the board.](#) This could include the following:

- Swim with a buddy.
- Information about rip currents.
- Identification of any structure impacting waves or currents.
- Watch for and obey flags.
- Etc.