



NATIONAL CRITERIA PROCESS

Blue Flag is an international award program which is operated at the national level by National Operators (NO) and evaluated by a National Jury to ensure national regulation is followed. The US NO held working groups on the four criteria categories to determine where criteria could be strengthened or modified to reflect significant but achievable objectives.

Please read the criteria and explanation document to get a full understanding of these highlights. **Red** text indicates criteria requirements which were modified or strengthened by the criteria working groups for US beaches.

SAFETY AND SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

CRITERION 27

- A beach with more than 50 users per day over 4 weeks, must have lifeguards.
 - **Lifeguard agencies must be currently USLA certified.**
 - Lifeguards must only be employed as lifeguards, be easily identifiable, and have appropriate equipment.
 - Areas patrolled by lifeguards should be identified to the public.
- On beaches with less than 50 users a day over 4 weeks and low hazards as determined by a **mandatory risk assessment.**
 - Public rescue equipment (PRE) can replace lifeguards unless the risk assessment states otherwise.
 - PREs must be clearly positioned at 100 meter intervals with safety instructions.

CRITERION 28

- First aid equipment must be available on the beach by means of lifeguards, a first aid station, equipment located in a shop/facility at the site, or first aid box.
- Stations or equipment must be clearly posted for easy locating.

CRITERION 30

- Management of different beach activities must be in place to prevent accidents and conflicts.
- The beach itself must be managed in accordance with an environmental plan which protects sensitive species and habitats.

CRITERION 31

- The public must have access to the Blue Flag beach.
- Access must be safe.
- Parking for people with limited abilities must be available and clearly marked.
- Emergency flag information should be explained on the information board.

CRITERION 29

- Emergency plans must provide clear procedures in case of an emergency.
- If the hazard persists contact and information should be posted on the information board for the public.

Emergency is defined as any event which leads to large scale impacts on the beach or bathing water quality such as, hurricanes, oil or hazardous waste spills, algal blooms, etc.

CRITERION 32

- There should be a potable water source available to the public.

CRITERION 33

- At least one beach in every municipality must provide access for those with limited abilities to use and enjoy the beach.
- **Designs must include wheelchair use and comply with ADA and ABA standards.**