



### 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.

### WATER QUALITY HIGHLIGHTS

#### CRITERION 7

- at least one sampling point at highest concentration of bathers
- additional points at potential sources of pollution
- take samples for microbiological and physical-chemical
- samples should be taken 12 inches below the surface
- **E.coli or fecal coliform samples must be taken once a month**
- **Enterococci samples must be taken once a week**
- In the event of a short-term pollution event, one additional sample is to be taken to confirm the incident has ended
- Discounting samples because of short-term pollution is allowed for a maximum of 15% of the total number of samples

#### CRITERION 8

- an independent sampler must take the sample and an independent lab process the sample
- water quality results should be provided to the NO as soon as they are made available
- a sampling calendar must be established prior to the season
- water quality results for the previous four seasons must accompany all applications
- New beaches must submit 20 samples per sampling point with their first application

#### CRITERION 10

- beaches must meet the microbiological parameters below or their state's standard, whichever is stronger to the 95% percentile:

#### CRITERION 9

- a bathing water profile must be compiled for each site
- where sewage or urban/industrial discharges are identified within or adjacent to the award area, information to warn the public must be posted
- collection, treatment, and discharges of urban wastewater must meet national/international standards

#### CRITERION 11

- there must be no oil visible; no odor detected; no floatables present
- **harmful algal blooms and red tides must be monitored and beaches develop plans for advisories or closures**



American Shore & Beach Preservation Association  
Advocating for healthy coastlines

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Parameter	Coastal Water	Inland Water
Escherichia Coli	250cfu/100ml	500cfu/100ml
Intestinal Enterococci	100cfu/100ml	200cfu/100ml