

# Seaside Award Criteria - 2016 Revision

KEEP  
NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
BEAUTIFUL



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The Seaside Award will be presented to beaches on an annual basis, and refers to a section of beach which includes one water quality sampling point.

To be eligible for this award, the beach operator must provide evidence that they have addressed all criteria. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the award until these objectives can be met. Beaches are assessed during the season preceding that in which the Awards are made.

At all times throughout this text, the term 'must' indicates that the action is mandatory, while 'should' indicates that the action is advised.

## INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED FOR BEACH VISITORS

**Sufficient information must be displayed at or near the beach to enable a visitor to make an informed choice to bathe or not, and to easily locate the facilities and services offered.**

1. A code of conduct that reflects local rules governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas.
2. Information about bathing water quality.
3. A map of the beach indicating different facilities.
4. A promotional mark (plaque, flag, banner), along with basic information about the Seaside award or an indication of where to find this information.
5. Evidence that the interests of any protected sites and rare or protected species have been addressed in liaison with recognised local conservation organisations.

## BATHING WATER

**The water must be considered safe for bathing.**

6. A code of conduct that reflects local rules governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas.
7. The Beach Operator must highlight all existing wastewater discharge points[1] and riverine inputs within 1km of the Award area to the National Operator and the public. Larger inputs such as Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) within 3km must also be notified.

## SAFETY

**The safety equipment and services provided must, so far as is reasonably practicable, minimize the possibility of harm to beach users.**

8. The Beach Operator must ensure a site-specific risk assessment has been carried out by appropriately qualified personnel. Suitable and sufficient control measures identified by that process must be put in place.

9. If lifeguards are provided the times and area patrolled must be clearly defined and marked both on the beach and on the beach map. Lifeguards must hold appropriate qualifications from a recognised training and assessment agent.
10. The Beach Operator must provide all first aid facilities specified in their risk assessment. The location and hours of operation must be clearly displayed. If the times that any of these facilities are available are limited this must be agreed with the National Operator and clearly stated at the beach.
11. So far as is reasonably practicable, easy and safe access to the beach must be provided for all, including people with impaired mobility. An access assessment should be completed indicating the measures in place.
12. The beach and facilities should be checked on a regular basis by the Operator or a designated agent. Frequency of supervision must be appropriate to the facilities and number of beach users necessary to maintain the award standard.
13. Any significant incident in the environs of the Award area must be notified to National Operator as soon as is reasonably practicable and at most within two weeks.

## LITTER AND WASTE

**The beach and adjoining facilities must be clean.**

14. There must be no obvious visual impact from litter or sewage-related debris (SRD) on the beach. The beach, intertidal area, backshore and any surrounding areas connected to the beach operation including carparks and amenity areas must be substantially free of litter, with no potentially harmful materials such as broken glass.
15. Properly secured and covered litter bins in adequate numbers should be made available for litter. These should be of suitable character and appearance and sited where appropriate to the surroundings. Where possible, recycling facilities must be provided and promoted.
16. The Beach Operator must provide appropriate facilities for the disposal of dog waste on the beach or at each access point.
17. The Beach Operator must provide adequate toilet facilities, cleaned and maintained, including facilities for disabled people.

## BEACH MANAGEMENT

**The beach must be well managed in partnership with the local community to protect and promote the local environment.**

18. The Beach Operator must consult users and the local community in producing a management plan or set of normal operating procedures for the beach.
19. The Beach Operator must develop a local emergency plan to cope with incidents which require the closure of the beach. Any incidents resulting in beach curtailment or closure must be reported to the National Operator within 24 hours.
20. The Beach Operator must prevent unauthorised camping or driving on the beach. Dumping of waste must be prohibited and prevented.

21. The Beach Operator must manage the conflicting and incompatible needs of different users and the local ecosystem, in line with the health, safety and environmental management plans. e.g. zoning for swimmers, surfers, windsurfers, motorized craft and nature conservation.  
Zoning, either physically or by time, should be enforced where necessary by clear signage at information points and entry points to access channels; with explicit reference in literature; with and appropriate physical barriers such as buoyed lanes.
22. Dogs may be permitted in the award area unless local regulations prevent it. During the hours of operation / supervision they must be on a lead within the award area. The Beach Operator must ensure that this is adequately enforced and that the public's attention is drawn to this requirement.
23. The Beach Operator must insure all buildings, facilities and beach equipment are properly maintained to a high standard.
24. The Beach Operator must provide adequate access and parking facilities within the environs of the beach, with provision for disabled people.