

Scotland's Beach Award Criteria 2018

Scotland's Beach Awards are the benchmark for quality beaches which are well-managed and enjoyed by people across Scotland. The Beach Award is a single beach award which Local Authorities and community groups can apply to which has simple and clear criteria for the effective management of a beach.

For a beach to be successful in achieving a Beach Award, it has to meet a number of criteria as listed below.

After an application has been received, the beach will be assessed based on the field visit from the previous year and a desk assessment of the current application. Successful applicants will then notified and awarded the flag. New applications will be visited and assessed prior to any award being made. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of May and the flag and/or plaque will be issued to them in time for the summer season.

Section A. Information Provision

Sufficient information must be displayed at a beach in order to ensure a safe, welcoming environment in which users can have a pleasant experience.

1. An information board should be displayed which has information on facilities, safety, water quality, useful contacts and relevant information for the safe and effective management of the beach. An information board should include educational materials and links to community events and activities.
2. A code of conduct must be displayed that reflects local rules governing the use of the beach and outlines the Beach Award area.
3. A map of the beach must be displayed which indicates the location of all facilities.
4. A promotional mark (flag, plaque or banner) with basic information about the award should be displayed.
5. Evidence that the interests of any protected sites and rare or protected species have been addressed in liaison with recognised local conservation organisations.

Section B. Water Quality

Sufficient information must be provided to the beach user to make an informed choice about bathing.

6. Information about water quality testing and the results must be displayed

- a. **If the beach is a designated bathing water**, complies with sufficient standard or above.
Must display by law profile summary & classification at the beach.
 - b. **If the beach is a designated bathing water** and has a poor classification
 - If real time signage is in place – can achieve an award & must display by law a profile summary and classification at the beach.
 - If real time signage is not in place – cannot achieve an award & must display by law a profile summary and classification at the beach.
 - c. **If it is not a designated bathing water and is not tested**, information should available to the public to explain this.
7. The Beach Operator must highlight waste water discharge points and riverine inputs within one mile of the beach/water to the National Operator and the public.
 8. The Beach Operator must inform the public of pollution or potential dangers by the posting of information at the information board and through the media if appropriate.

Section C. Beach Safety

Safety equipment and services provided must, so far as is reasonably practical, minimise the possibility of harm to beach users.

9. Beach users should be warned of the potential hazards of swimming and advised of appropriate behavior close to water.
 - a. *This information should be displayed on the information board, as stated above.*
10. The Beach Operator must ensure a site-specific risk assessment has been carried out by appropriate qualified personnel. Suitable and sufficient control measures must be put in place to ensure safe use of the beach and surrounding area.
11. Appropriate rescue equipment should be present, well located and easily accessed. In some cases this may also include a lifeguard station.
 - b. *Any RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable incident should be notified to the National Operator as soon as is reasonably practicable and at most within two weeks.*
12. Information should be provided on emergency contacts and advice on what to do in the event of an emergency.
13. The Beach Operator must have an appropriate local emergency plan to cope with incidents which require the closure of the beach. Where there is a written emergency procedure it should be submitted with the application.

Section D. Beach Management

The Beach must be well managed for users, the community and the local environment.

14. The Beach Operator must manage the conflicting needs of different users as well as local ecosystems, in line with health, safety and environmental plans.
15. Dogs may be permitted in the award area unless local regulations prevent it. They must be kept under control within the award area.
16. The Beach Operator should encourage community engagement and provide evidence that community involved activities take place at the beach.
 - a. *This may be in the form of beach cleans or assistance in the management of facilities.*
 - b. *Or the presence of user groups, such as sailing clubs, canoe clubs, wildlife groups etc*

Section E. Access and Facilities

The facilities of the beach should be well managed and maintained in order to provide a good beach experience to all potential beach users.

17. So far as is reasonably practicable, easy and safe access to the beach award area must be provided for all.
18. The Beach Operator should manage unauthorised camping or driving on the beach.
 - a. *In Scotland wild camping is allowed under the Scottish Access Code, in areas where this occurs the beach operator should have adequate measures in place to ensure that camping does not affect award criteria i.e. cleanliness.*
19. The Beach Operator must ensure that any buildings, facilities and equipment present are maintained to a high standard.
20. The Beach Operator must provide adequate parking facilities, where appropriate, with suitable disabled access. Where necessary, advice should be sought from suitable organisations to develop traffic management plans.
 - a. *In cases where no parking facilities are present the Beach Operator should ensure that access is suitable via other methods.*
 - b. *The Beach Operator should encourage and promote sustainable transport options such as bicycles (which may include provision for bicycle paths/storage) and bus travel (with appropriate timetable information).*
21. The Beach Operator should provide toilet facilities which are clean and well maintained, with sufficient provisions for washing/drying hands, toilet roll, waste bins and sanitary bins.
 - a. *In areas where there are no toilet facilities Beach Operators should provide information on the nearest facilities.*

Section F: Cleanliness

The Beach must be clean.

22. The Beach, intertidal area, backshore, dunes and any surrounding areas connected to the beach operation (e.g. car parks, playgrounds and amenity areas) must be substantially free of litter, graffiti, flytipping and dog fouling.
23. The Beach Operator must provide appropriate litter bins in adequate numbers, properly secured and well maintained.
24. The Beach Operator should provide appropriate facilities for the disposal of dog waste on the beach or at each access point.
25. The Beach Operator should provide adequate recycling facilities, where appropriate, and encourage beach users to recycle their waste.