
Yachting in The Bahamas

Notice to yacht owners, managers and Captains/skippers

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Yacht Notice (YN) is issued by the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) to provide an overview of the national requirements for yachting in Bahamian waters.
- 1.2. Information on registration of yachts under the Bahamas flag can be found in YN002.

2. Application

- 2.1. This Notice applies to all yachts in Bahamian waters.

3. Yachting in The Bahamas

- 3.1. The Bahamas has many quality ports offering Marina services, drydocking facilities, repair and maintenance yards.
- 3.2. Owners of yachts that are resident in or intend to visit the Bahamas must make themselves aware of any importation and customs duties that may be payable as well as any prohibited articles, merchandise or substances under Bahamian law. Such matters are outside the responsibility or purview of the BMA.
- 3.3. Visiting yachts must clear Customs and Immigration at the nearest designated Port of Entry. A list of official ports of entry into The Bahamas is provided at the following link: www.bahamas.com/boating-ports-entry.
- 3.4. To Enter the Islands of The Bahamas, private vessels need the following:
 - i. One (1) copy of The Bahamas [Customs Clearance Form](#)
 - ii. One (1) Bahamas Immigration Card per person
 - iii. Proof of Citizenship—Passport
 - iv. Vessel registration documents (Vessel title / proof of ownership)

- 3.5. On entry to each port, the yellow quarantine flag¹ is to be flown and Customs notified of arrival. **Only the Captain is permitted to leave the boat until the vessel has been cleared.**
- 3.6. Bahamas Customs and Immigration officials will come to the vessel. Everyone on board must have proof of citizenship and fill out an immigration card. U.S. citizens must present a passport.
- 3.7. Before leaving the islands of The Bahamas, the copy of the immigration card shall be surrendered at the last Bahamian port visited.
- 3.8. For more information on Customs entry and duty, please visit the Bahamas Customs website at <https://www.bahamascustoms.gov.bs/>.

4. Entry Fees

- 4.1. All yachts entering The Bahamas are required to pay an entry fee.
- 4.2. Fees are subject to change. Updated fees effective 01 January 2020 are as follows:

Yacht length	For 3 months	Annual
Up to 35 feet (~10.4 metres)	\$150	\$300
35 – 100 feet (~10.7 – 30.5 metres)	\$300	\$600
100 – 150 feet (~30.5 – 45.7 metres)	\$500	\$1,000
150 – 200 feet (~45.7 – 61 metres)	\$800	\$1,600
Over 200 feet (~61 metres)	\$1,000	\$2,000

- 4.3. The fees cover:
 - i. Cruising Permit
 - ii. Fishing Permit²
 - iii. Departure Tax for up to three (3) persons. Each additional person above three will be charged a \$20 departure tax. This fee is good for a second re-entry within a 90-day period.

¹ International Code of Signals ‘Quebec’: “my vessel is healthy, and I request free pratique”

² Please refer to section 5

- 4.4. If the stay is planned to be for longer than 12 months, special arrangements must be made with Bahamas Customs and Immigration.
- 4.5. Bahamas Customs and Immigration office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Officers are on call during holidays and weekends. There is no overtime charge.
- 4.6. Please refer to <https://www.bahamas.com/faq/enteringexiting-policies> for current policies and fees.

5. Fishing

- 5.1. Fishing in The Bahamas is regulated.
- 5.2. Long-line fishing in Bahamian waters is illegal. All long-line fishing gear must be stowed below deck while transiting through Bahamian waters.
- 5.3. The Bahamian Government imposes significant penalties for catching crawfish (lobster) or other marine life out of season, taking undersized catch, or fishing in protected areas.
- 5.4. Further details of Bahamas fishing regulations are [available here](#)³:

6. Firearms

- 6.1. Firearms in The Bahamas are subject to strict controls under the Firearms Act⁴.
- 6.2. If there is a firearm on board it must be declared to Bahamas Customs. **Only shotguns and handguns are permitted.**
- 6.3. The following must be provided:
 - i. Firearm serial number
 - ii. Name of the manufacturer
 - iii. Exact count of ammunition.
- 6.4. Whilst a firearm may be kept on the yacht, it must always be under lock and key and must not be removed.
- 6.5. In cases of emergencies, which require the boat owners to depart by air, Bahamian Police or Customs must be advised. Police or Customs will accompany the owners to retrieve the firearm to their temporary keep and will present the owners with a receipt.

³ https://www.bahamas.com/sites/default/files/fishing_regulations_for_the_bahamas.pdf

⁴ See http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/en/legislation/laws.html?view=acts_alpha

6.6. Upon return to the island, Bahamian Police or Customs will escort the owner to the yacht and return the firearm.

6.7. Any infraction of this law will be dealt with severely.

7. Daily excursions within Bahamas waters only

7.1. A charter yacht of 12 metres (approximately 39 feet 4 inches) to 24 metres (approximately 78 feet 9 inches) length (L)⁵ that is chartered for a daily excursion **WITHIN BAHAMAS WATERS ONLY** and wishing to carry more than 12 passengers must gain specific approval from the Port Department of the Bahamas Government.

7.2. The Port Department can be contacted at: portcustomerservice@bahamas.gov.bs

8. Bahamas Shipowners' Association

8.1. Membership of the Bahamas Shipowners' Association (BSA) is optional for any yacht registered in The Bahamas. The purpose of the association is to promote members' common interests by "pooling" knowledge and experience and collectively providing a clear voice in the development of the maritime industry.

8.2. See <http://bahamasshipownersassociation.com> for more details.

⁵ "Length (L)" means 96% of the total length on a waterline of a ship at 85% of the least moulded depth measured from the top of the keel, or the length from the fore side of the stem to the axis of the rudder stock on that waterline, if that be greater. In ships designed with a rake of keel the waterline on which this is measured shall be parallel to the designed waterline.

