

Environmental Regulations for Yachts in Turkey

The object of the schemes explained below are to protect the biological diversity and environment by the prevention of pollution by vessels regardless of name, purpose, tonnage and means of propulsion other than a rowing boat propelled by oars.

There are two issues of immediate concern to yachts sailing in Turkish Waters:

- **Blue Card Scheme**
 - This scheme is intended for the prohibition of marine pollution and the Mugla district is a pilot area. All black water and grey water waste must not be discharged into the sea, but must be pumped out at a designated pumping station.
 - All ships, including yachts will be required to carry a Blue Card, obtainable from marinas or from harbour master's offices, on arrival or before sailing. The cost of the Blue Card, which is a smart card recording boat and crew details, will be 75 TL. The card will be a record of a vessels discharge of black/grey water waste.
 - This initially covers the area from Bodrum to Fethiye (Mugla district), including Gocek bay

- **Special Environment Protection Zone**
 - This covers Gocek bay and Skopea Limani and imposes restriction on usage within that area
 - Restriction on the number of vessels in the area has been proposed but the precise number is not known, and how it would be controlled.
 - All vessels within this area must moor at an approved mooring – yacht harbour, jetty, buoys, bollards etc. No anchoring will be permitted.
 - The limit of how long you can remain moored will be 11 days
 - Cooking on deck and ashore is prohibited.

- **PUMP OUT STATIONS**
 - Some stations are operational, but many of them are not yet. It is planned that there will be 30 stations . Organisations responsible are listed on the Turkish Marine Environment Protection Association (Turmepa) web site.

- **CONTROLS & FINES**
 - The Turkish Coast Guard & Muğla District Governor Office boats are authorised to inspect the electronic Blue Cards. **Details are not yet available.** However ships will be expected to discharge waste water to the stations regularly, and volumes assessed per person on board per day.

These schemes are scheduled to come into effect from March 2010. However, there are obviously many questions about how the scheme will operate, and who will be implementing it. For example: the majority of yachts will not have facilities for collecting grey water waste so would be unable to comply with the regulations.

However, the Turkish Tourism Ministry does not support the regulations although they have not officially objected yet; the Turkish Chamber of Shipping - Fethiye Branch – has begun a court case to cancel the regulations; the Marine Affairs Ministry who control the Harbour Masters have some objections ; and the Turkish Coast Guard Commandant has not received a direct order from the ministry yet, but the Mugla Governor can ask the Coast Guard in the Mugla district to inspect the Blue Cards.

The current position is that the implementation of the Blue Card Scheme is raising many issues to which nobody seems able to give definitive answers. The advice from the Turks is to continue sailing in Turkey and they will endeavour to have more information before the start of the sailing season.