



# BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

## GUIDANCE FOR YACHTS

<http://biot.gov.io/>

### PERMITS

You and your accompanying crew have applied for a permit to moor in specified locations in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). You must read and understand this document, as it contains important information about what is expected from you as you transit through the Territory.

The permit system is only in place to allow vessels to rest at specific anchorages in order to provide safe passage through the Indian Ocean. In keeping with this, mooring permits will have a maximum validity of 28 days and are valid for the Outer Islands only.

You are subject to BIOT law when inside its territorial waters. If you break any of the laws, you will become subject, as in any country, to a range of censures and punishments, including fines, imprisonment, removal from the Territory, or the impounding of your vessel.

**You should be aware that any person who enters BIOT without a valid permit is liable to imprisonment for 3 years and/or a fine of £3,000.**

You must moor your vessel at the approved sites only, as indicated on the last page of this document (page 7), to help conserve BIOT's fragile coral environment. If your vessel is not moored at one of the approved sites, you will be issued with an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000.

"Mooring your vessel" is defined in BIOT law as "to anchor or to remain stationary by the use of engines or any line or device in the territorial sea or internal waters of the Territory or to be tied up or beached or hauled ashore at any place in the Territory". As you will appreciate this means you may not stop your vessel (except in an emergency) anywhere in the inland or territorial waters of BIOT other than at the approved sites.

BIOT Customs and Immigration officials patrol the Territory to check permits and passports. The passports of all passengers/crew will be checked against the details provided on the Visit Permit Request form. You will be asked to explain any discrepancies. If your date of arrival is affected by the weather or other unavoidable factors and you wish to amend the dates on your permit, you should contact the BIOT Administration either before you arrive in the Territory or before the date listed on the permit, whichever is first. Permits cannot be amended after they have become active. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct dates on your permit. You should not moor in the Territory outside of the dates on your permit; doing so can leave you liable to an on-the-spot fine or a summons to the courts.

## **SELF SUFFICIENCY**

BIOT is extremely remote. "Marina" services are not provided. There is no mail or refuse collection service and yachts must be completely self-sufficient whilst in the Territory. You must have sufficient food, medical supplies as well as fuel to get from the Outer Islands of BIOT to your next intended port, or at least the nearest port (Gan – 350 miles), where repairs or other emergent work can be undertaken should it become necessary.

## **MEDICAL FACILITIES**

There are NO medical facilities or air ambulances (helicopter or SAR) in BIOT and search and rescue facilities are extremely limited. You will need to organise a medevac out of the Territory if emergency medical care is required.

## **NATURE RESERVES**

All of the islands in the Chagos Archipelago are nature reserves. The following islands are strict nature reserves. It is an offence to approach within 3 nautical miles, land on or anchor at:

Great Chagos Bank:           The Three Brothers and Resurgent Island  
  Danger Island  
  Cow Island  
  Nelson Island

Or to approach within 200 metres, land on or anchor at:

Peros Banhos Atoll:           All the islands to the east of a line drawn between the easternmost point of land on Moresby Island and the easternmost point of land on Fouquet Island.

Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £1,000. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months and/or to a fine not exceeding £5,000 and to detention and forfeiture of any boat and equipment used when committing the offence.

## **DIEGO GARCIA**

Unauthorised vessels or persons are not permitted to access this island and no unauthorised vessel is permitted to approach within 3 nautical miles. Vessels in transit, on “innocent passage” as defined under Maritime Law, should maintain their course away from Diego Garcia.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Please assist the conservation of BIOT environment by adhering to the following and by ensuring that others visiting the Territory also respect it. Failure to observe BIOT’s regulations may result in the application of the penalties listed below.

- ◆ You are not permitted to remain ashore overnight (between sunset and sunrise) nor set up an encampment nor erect any structure or installation. Any such infringement will be dismantled and disposed of without compensation. Other property left ashore unattended is similarly liable. Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months and/or to a fine not exceeding £3,000.
- ◆ You should respect the old plantation buildings or other structures on the islands. Recent examination of the old buildings at Ile du Coin and Ile Boddam, have shown some structural defects. These buildings are out of bounds until the BIOT Administration has been able to make the buildings safe. Any persons entering do so at their own risk. Do not damage them e.g. with graffiti or climb on them. Any person who commits such offences is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £200. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years and/or a fine of unlimited amount.
- ◆ All fauna and flora are protected by law: The following are, for example, prohibited:
  - The collection of shells, molluscs or coral (dead or alive);
  - The killing or injuring of any crustacea (including crabs) and mollusca (including octopuses), or the possession of these creatures either alive or dead;
  - The killing of animals (or the possession of animals, alive or dead);
  - Intentionally destroying, damaging or taking a wild bird’s nest, wild bird’s egg or turtle’s egg;
  - Intentionally disturbing dependent young of a wild bird;
  - Taking or being in possession of any specified flora;
  - Taking any alive or dead wild animal (other than permitted rod or line caught fish) out of the Territory.
- ◆ Any person found guilty, upon conviction, of the above offences is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000.
- ◆ All unlicensed fishing (except non-commercial fishing by rod or line for your personal consumption within three days) is also prohibited.

Any person who commits such an offence is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding £100,000. If convicted of such an offence, the local Magistrate's Court may order the forfeiture of equipment and boat.

**In order to assist the BIOT Fisheries Officers in monitoring fish stocks, you must record numbers of fish taken, the species and size. A fishing log sheet will be sent to you with your permit and should be returned to the BIOT Administration within two weeks of leaving the Territory (nil returns are required).**

- ◆ Vegetation must not be cut; it protects the shore from erosion and provides habitat for the islands' natural inhabitants. Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000.
- ◆ Fauna and flora from outside the Chagos Archipelago must not be introduced into the Territory. Alien species of vegetation and animals can have a devastating effect on the natural ecology of the Archipelago. In particular, pets are not to be landed. Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000.
- ◆ All garbage is to be removed. There is not a refuse collections service. Any person found to have left litter or garbage is liable to a fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000.

## **DRUGS**

It is illegal to import, export, supply/offer, produce or use a controlled drug in the Territory. It is also illegal to cultivate any plant of the genus *Cannabis*. Any person found in possession of a controlled drug is liable to be imprisoned and/or ordered to pay a fine of unlimited amount (see the table below). Whilst a person found in possession of a Class C drug may be given an on-the-spot penalty of £500, failure to pay that penalty could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for up to two years and/or an unlimited fine.

## **SCUBA DIVING**

The unauthorised use of scuba diving equipment or underwater-swimming equipment (including hookah systems) is prohibited. Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £5,000. If convicted of such an offence, the Magistrate's Court may order that any vessel, together with any equipment or goods on board in connection with the offence shall be detained until the fine has been paid.

## **EMERGENCIES**

If you have an emergency that you consider life threatening, you should declare it as a maritime emergency (SOLAS) in accordance with International Maritime Regulations. In such a situation, BIOT authorities in Diego Garcia can be contacted on **2.182MHz HF SSB** or VHF if within range or 00 246 3702938 (BIOT Police Station 24/7). All reasonable assistance will be considered but resources are extremely limited and do not include any air lift (helicopter) or long-range fast patrol boat capability.

BIOT ADMINISTRATION  
MAY 2017

## OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

OFFENCE	FIXED PENALTY	PENALTY UPON CONVICTION (Not exceeding)
Mooring without a permit	£1,000	3 years' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Mooring where not permitted	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Failing or refusing to produce documents	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Obstructing a Visiting Vessels Control Officer (VVCO)	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Refusing or failing to comply with a VVCO's direction	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Giving false or misleading answers to a VVCO	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Preventing or attempting to prevent another from complying with a direction or question of a VVCO	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Unauthorised entry to the territorial sea of Diego Garcia	N/A	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Failing to observe a visitor or visiting vessel condition	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Overnight camping/erection of structures	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Collection of shells etc, killing or taking of wildlife etc	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Cutting vegetation (not in a strict nature reserve)	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Introducing fauna and flora (not in a strict nature reserve)	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Leaving garbage/litter etc	£500	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £3,000 fine
Causing criminal damage (incl graffiti)	£200	10 years' imprisonment and/or and unlimited fine
Entering a strict nature reserve	£1,000	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine
Cutting vegetation (strict nature reserve)	£1,000	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine
Introducing fauna and flora (strict nature reserve)	£1,000	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine
Unlicensed fishing (except for personal use)	N/A	£100,000 fine and possible forfeiture of equipment and boat
Use of diving equipment	£200	6 months' imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine
Possessing a Class A drug	N/A	7 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine
Possessing a Class B drug	N/A	5 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine
Possessing a Class C drug	£500	2 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine

## PERMITTED MOORING SITES: LATITUDE/LONGITUDE REFERENCES

All co-ordinates are in ddd mm.mm and all are deg S, deg E. Co-ordinates mark the ends of lines drawn along or roughly parallel to islands, and the zones permitted for anchoring lie between each line and its adjacent Island.

*Italics give the approximate description of each anchoring location.*

Site	Latitude/Longitude (ddd mm.mm)
<b>Salomon, Ile Boddam</b> <i>Southwest of a line between Iles Diable &amp; Poule</i> W (Diable) E (Poule)	5°S 21.05 / 72°E 12.51 5°S 21.45 / 72°E 13.17
<b>Salomon, Ile Fouquet/Takamaka</b> <i>Southeast of a line from mid Takamaka to the SE tip of Fouquet</i> N (Takamaka) S (Fouquet)	5°S 19.73 / 72°E 15.94 5°S 20.64 / 72°E 15.40
<b>Peros Banhos, Ile Diamante</b> <i>Northwest of a line stretching roughly the full length of Diamante</i> N (Diamante) S (Diamante)	5°S 15.17 / 71°E 46.63 5°S 15.94 / 71°E 45.56
<b>Peros Banhos, Ile du Coin</b> <i>Southwest of a line from mid Anglais to two-thirds down Ile du Coin</i> N (Anglais) Mid (Ile Coin) S (Ile Coin)	5°S 26.30 / 71°E 45.52 5°S 26.67 / 71°E 45.76 5°S 26.87 / 71°E 46.46
<b>Peros Banhos, Fouquet</b> <i>South of a line from mid Mapou du Coin to East end of Fouquet</i> Outer W Outer E	5°S 27.60 / 71°E 47.79 5°S 27.40 / 71°E 48.75