



BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

GUIDANCE FOR VISITORS

You and your accompanying passengers have applied for a permit to visit the Chagos Islands, excluding Diego Garcia, of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).

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, deportation, 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 6), 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.

“Marina” services are not provided. There is no mail or refuse collection service.

BIOT Customs and Immigration officials visit the approved mooring sites 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.

NATURE RESERVES

All of the Chagos Islands are nature reserves. The following islands are strict nature reserves. It is an offence to approach within 200 meters, land on or anchor at:

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| Great Chagos Bank: | The Three Brothers and Resurgent Island Danger Island Cow Island Nelson Island |
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|---------------------|--|
| 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. |
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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 of 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 structure 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 have been able to make the buildings safe. Any persons entering do so at their own risk. Do not damage them e.g. with graffiti. 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.
- ◆ 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 of crabs (or the possession of crabs, 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 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 Magistrates' 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 log sheet is available for download and should be returned to the BIOT Administration within 10 days of leaving the territory.

- ◆ 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 Class A or B drug is liable, on conviction, to a term not exceeding 14 years and/or an unlimited fine. Any person found in possession of a Class C drug is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to a term not exceeding 12 months and/or a fine not exceeding £1,000.

SCUBA DIVING

The use of scuba diving equipment or underwater-swimming equipment 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 Magistrates' 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 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. All reasonable assistance will be considered.

BIOT ADMINISTRATION
JULY 2015

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

| OFFENCE | FIXED PENALTY | PENALTY UPON CONVICTION (Not exceeding) |
|---|---------------|--|
| Mooring without a permit | £1,000 | 3 years and/or £3,000 |
| Mooring where not permitted | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Failing to produce documents | £200 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Obstructing a Visiting Vessels Control Officer (VVCO) | £200 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Refusing or failing to comply with a VVCO's direction | £200 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Giving false or misleading answers to a VVCO | £200 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Preventing or attempting to prevent another from complying with a direction or question of a VVCO | £200 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Entering the territorial sea of Diego Garcia | N/A | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Failing to observe a visitor or visiting vessel condition | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Overnight camping/erection of structures | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Collection of shells etc, killing or taking of wildlife etc | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Cutting vegetation (not in a strict nature reserve) | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Introducing fauna and flora (not in a strict nature reserve) | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Leaving garbage / litter etc | £500 | 6 months and/or £3,000 |
| Causing criminal damage (incl graffiti) | £200 | 10 years |
| Entering a strict nature reserve | £1,000 | 6 months and/or £5,000 |
| Cutting vegetation (strict nature reserve) | £1,000 | 6 months and/or £5,000 |
| Introducing fauna and flora (strict nature reserve) | £1,000 | 6 months and/or £5,000 |
| Unlicensed fishing (except for personal use) | N/A | £100,000 and possible forfeiture of equipment and boat |
| Use of diving equipment | £200 | 6 months and/or £5,000 |
| Possessing a Class A or B drug | N/A | 14 years and/or unlimited fine |
| Possessing a Class C drug | £500 | 12 months and/or £1,000 |

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) |
|---|--|
| Salomon, Ile Boddam <i>Southwest of a line between Iles Diable & Poule</i> W (Diable) E (Poule) | 5°S 21.05 / 72°E 12.51 5°S 21.45 / 72°E 13.17 |
| Salomon, Ile Fouquet / Takamaka <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 |
| Peros Banhos, Ile Diamante <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 |
| Peros Banhos, Ile du Coin <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 |
| Peros Banhos, Fouquet <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 |