



Welcome to the Blue Star Diving Recognition Program!

Guide for: Business Owners/Blue Star Liaisons

Thank you for working to become a Blue Star Dive Operator. Here is a helpful guide that outlines the steps to successfully complete all of the requirements. Following these in order, and getting your staff and management onboard, will result in an easy path forward and continued successful recognition.

To Do:

- ❑ **Sign an Operator Agreement and designate a Blue Star Liaison within your organization.**
 - ❑ The Blue Star Liaison is responsible for maintaining communication with Blue Star Coordinator(s) at Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and tracking your organization's progress. *This should be a full-time or permanent employee who can dedicate 1-2 hours of on-the-clock work to the program per month.* Have any new Blue Star Liaisons reach out to the Blue Star Coordinator(s) at the sanctuary for a quick introduction.

- ❑ **Require each staff member to complete the online Blue Star Diving Program training.**
 - ❑ You will receive a custom link for our online training portal. Please email bluestar.diving@noaa.gov to request a training profile for your organization. Every staff member must complete this training annually. You can request an updated list of people who have completed the online training under your shop profile at any time.

- ❑ **Incorporate [Blue Star Reef Etiquette Video](#) into booking confirmations.**
 - ❑ The suggested method is to provide the video in a booking confirmation email with the following language; "Prior to your arrival, please watch [this short video](#) to learn more about diving and snorkeling in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and how you can help to protect this special place!" Shops are also encouraged to display the video on loop in retail locations, when possible. (Video Link:

<https://nmsfloridakeys.blob.core.windows.net/floridakeys-prod/media/videos/reef-etiquette.mp4>)

- Train your staff to conduct a pre-dive Blue Star Dive briefing on every charter that you operate.** Use the Blue Star Dive briefing slate to ensure your staff are communicating the important educational topics that are the foundation of the Blue Star Diving recognition program. During the ride along with sanctuary staff, we will be evaluating your staff's communication of the dive briefing topics. For non-diving/snorkeling charters you may provide the [modified briefing](#).

- Use the online [Tracker Google Form](#) to submit completed requirements annually.** This form requests information on your company's pumpout procedure, oil recycling procedure, number of divers/snorkelers in the water, etc. Please contact bluestar.diving@noaa.gov with any questions.

All staff, full-time, part-time, and independent contractors must:

- Complete the Online Training* once per calendar year.
 - Organize and/or participate in a special conservation-related activity* once per calendar year. Examples include: reef cleanups, mangrove cleanups, REEF fish counts, Goal: Clean Seas Florida Keys cleanups, participation in coral restoration, participation in City Nature Challenge, etc.
- Ensure your captains are familiar with correct mooring buoy usage and regulations regarding anchoring within the sanctuary both in and out of Sanctuary Preservation Areas.**
 - Display Blue Star brochures and stickers in shop (if applicable) and on vessel.**
 - Schedule and complete a ride along each year.** When you feel that your staff is adequately prepared to competently give a Blue Star briefing to a dive trip and have completed most of the above requirements, get in touch with the Blue Star Coordinators at the sanctuary at bluestar.diving@noaa.gov to find a time for them to come out and observe a dive trip.
 - Add the Blue Star logo to your website and link to www.sanctuarybluestar.org**
 - Arrange for a quote and picture for Blue Star promotional media.** Submit the necessary photo release to the sanctuary.
 - Send Blue Star Coordinators your organization's details to be added to the Marine Sanctuary Explorer App.**
 - Business Name (as you would like it on the app)
 - Address

- ❑ Phone Number
 - ❑ Hours of Operation
 - ❑ A short description from each Blue Star operator about their offerings. No longer than 345 characters. This should highlight the services they provide and unique opportunities for guests who book with them.
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- ❑ **Owners and Blue Star liaisons should sign up for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary newsletter email [here](#) and encourage staff to do the same.** This newsletter contains updates on the Blue Star program, training opportunities, and local environmental news.

It is important to stay in contact with the Blue Star Coordinators throughout your onboarding process. If you have questions at any time, need more education materials, or need to discuss Blue Star participation please let us know.



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