



Certification for Eco-friendly hotels, condos and businesses in Akumal

Centro Ecológico Akumal (CEA)

In our efforts to help protect the marine and coastal ecosystem in Akumal, Centro Ecológico Akumal (CEA) works with local hotels, condominiums and businesses to apply best practices for resource management. The criteria for determining the “eco-friendliness” of a business is based on simple voluntary actions applied in Akumal. There are a number of certification criteria being applied in the Caribbean and CEA has drawn on the most general of these to develop specific guidelines for our community, considering the most important issues specific to Akumal. These criteria are meant to be solely for local use and do not imply any regional, global, official or legal certification for business practices in the Akumal region.

Besides helping to improve ecological practices in Akumal, this guide serves to build sustainable business practices and to strengthen customer satisfaction. Certified businesses will be listed on the CEA Web site and in our Information Center as part of the Sustainable Tourism Program.

The Certification process is voluntary and has short, medium and long-term actions that people and businesses can take to improve their natural resource management. These are indicated below and a site specific process can be developed for each business.

All icons indicating an environmentally wise practice must be verified by CEA. If any company would like to add or delete anything about their business, please contact us.

The eco-friendly criteria are broken into four categories by which each business will be evaluated on a yearly basis by experts at CEA.

A. Beach management – As Akumal means “place of the turtle” in Maya, it is quite important to make sure our beaches are well managed during nesting season, from May to October. The following actions should be taken:

1. Lights on the beach are reduced and changed to red or orange.
2. Noise at night is kept to a minimum, especially from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
3. Beaches are kept clear of furniture, debris or anything that may obstruct the mother turtles' paths and nesting areas and the hatchlings' journey to sea.
4. Security staff are trained by CEA each nesting season and participate in our patrol program.
5. Nests are not disturbed once they are marked.
6. Any nesting or hatching events are reported to CEA.

These activities can be carried out in the first year of the program and each year thereafter.

B. Water management – Water pollution is a major cause of reef and sea life degradation. Good wastewater management is important to keeping our bays and community healthy. The Akumal business should:

1. Use tertiary treatment such as artificial wetlands for its wastewater.
2. Review (with CEA) wastewater treatment system once a year for proper operation.
3. Use environmentally friendly laundering system, including biodegradable soaps and cleaning materials.
4. Toilets and sinks maintained against leaks.
5. Connect to Municipal drainage when possible.
6. Capture rainwater when possible (for pools; bonus).

Year One – Activity 2

Year One, Two and Three – Activities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

C. Recycling – Keeping our jungle and beaches free of garbage is a daily struggle. Each business should:

1. Have a separation system on site to recycle its glass, plastic, aluminum and paper waste.
2. Recycle batteries.
3. Compost its organic waste.
4. Not dump debris in the mangrove/jungle.

Year One – Activity 1, 2, 4

Year Two – Activity 1, 2, 3, 4

All Activities may be carried out each year.

D. Environmental Education – Education is a key element in protecting our reef and coastal area. Each business may help raise awareness among visitors and locals on specific best practices for snorkeling, diving, or just visiting Akumal. For dive shops, this includes use of ICRAN MAR Standards. These tips should be placed in each hotel/condo room or business, available to all visitors, used in tours, and include:

1. Eco-friendly guides for snorkeling and diving; protecting coral reefs.
2. Information on marine turtle protection.
3. Information on CEA and how to be a CEA Member.

Year One – Activity 1, 2, 3, 4

All Activities may be carried out each year.

Centro Ecológico Akumal's Eco-Directory is just one of the many ways we live up to our mission to protect the marine and coastal ecosystem for future generations, both human and wildlife.

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Thank you for participating!