

Coral Bleaching Checklist For Managers and Dive Operators

To access the digital
version of this checklist,
aim your phone camera
at this QR code



Before

Being prepared prior to a bleaching event helps tremendously. Avoid the scramble and take the following steps to get ahead.

Develop and/or review your bleaching response plans

- Don't have one? Check the Reef Resilience Network guidance to develop a [Bleaching Response Plan](#)

Sign up for bleaching alerts for specific areas using:

- [NOAA Coral Reef Watch](#) (global)
- [Allen Coral Atlas](#) (global)
- [Western Indian Ocean Coral Bleaching Monitoring Service](#)
- [SIMAR](#) (Caribbean)

Get contact information for authorities, dive operators, managers and other key partners (coralreefwatch@noaa.gov, beaching@allencoralatlas.org, and other local NGOs)

Connect with local monitoring groups and support monitoring plans for the region

Join a citizen science monitoring network (examples below)

- Global – [Coral Watch](#), [Reef Check](#)
- Great Barrier Reef – [Eye on the Reef \(GBRMPA\)](#)
- [Philippines Coral Bleaching Watch](#)
- [Coral Bleaching Indonesia](#)

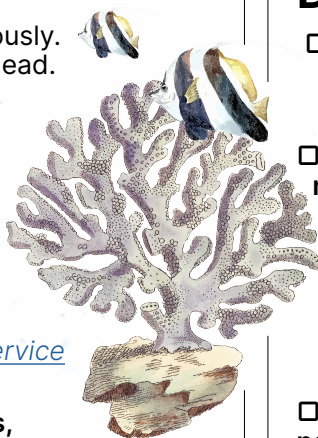
Observe and document changes on the reef

- Take plenty of photos of corals and their environment

Work with stakeholders to reduce other stressors on the reef

- Set up mooring to prevent anchoring (if you must anchor, do so in sand patches)
- Reduce fishing pressure and protect key herbivore species, like parrotfish
- Don't touch corals, and keep hands and feet off the reef (stand in the sand)
- Use reef-safe sunscreen
- Ensure you have proper wastewater treatment to reduce contaminants from sewage since bleached corals are more susceptible to diseases

Communicate to diving guests how they can support



During

Help reduce stressors on the reef

- Give busy dive and snorkel sites a rest, especially if corals are fluorescing
- Take a break from fishing, including spearfishing

Connecting with local monitoring groups and NGOs to document and report the bleaching event

- Observe carefully which corals survive and which ones die (ecological and socioeconomic impacts) – this is really important for understanding adaptation, resilience and restoration efforts
- Take photos in the same landscapes as your “before” sites
- Send the information to coralreefwatch@noaa.gov and/or bleaching@allencoralatlas.com

Communicate about bleaching events as climate impacts, and advocate for policies that address climate change to the media and government authorities

- Ask them what they'll do to take action - see ideas on this checklist

Add an explanation of what's happening to the reef in your dive brief

After

It's important to document lessons learned and ensure data informs management decisions.

Observe and document long-term impacts

- Write down and take photos of the species dying and surviving
- Communicate observations to authorities and NGOs

Debrief about the coral bleaching impacts and responses in a coordinated manner with all stakeholders

Continue working to reduce stressors on the reef

Communicate about climate impacts, and advocate for policies that address climate change

If your ongoing restoration project is facing coral bleaching, check the [Coral Restoration Consortium Guidelines](#) for information on what you can do now to minimize damage, as well as how to identify resilient corals for future restoration efforts.

