Bahamas Entry Clearance for Private Yachts

Executive summary

For a **foreign, private, non-commercial yacht** entering the Bahamas, the controlling regime is a combination of customs law, immigration law, visa rules, agricultural import controls, and port/boat-registration rules. The core operational distinction is simple: a yacht used **only for pleasure and recreation** may enter on **Form C2A** and receive a **Temporary Cruising Permit (Form C39)**; a vessel used **for commercial purposes, charter, hire, or cargo carriage** is **not** a pleasure vessel for clearance purposes and must be entered as a commercial vessel, with additional licensing and reporting requirements. [1]

As of April 2026, the **current operational customs guidance** points to a digital-first process through the Bahamas Customs **Cruising Permit Module**: submit the inward declaration **before arrival**, select a registered port of entry, upload required documents, pay online, and then still physically present the yacht for boarding/examination at the port of entry. The captain must report directly to Customs on arrival, and until Customs and Immigration clear the yacht, **only the captain may disembark**. [2]

For people on board, the controlling questions are: **passport validity**, **visa nationality**, **whether the person is crew or passenger**, and **whether the person will merely visit, remain longer, or work**. The official immigration position is that travellers must satisfy the entry criteria in section 22 of the Immigration Act; the officer may grant leave to remain for a period up to **eight months** in aggregate from the last landing unless a permit under section 30 applies. The public visa list shows the Bahamas waives visas for many nationalities, but a separate list of designated nationalities still requires a visa, with a notable specific exception for certain Indian nationals who already hold visas or permanent residence for the US, UK, Canada, or the Schengen area. [3]

For the yacht itself, the express arrival documents currently identified by Bahamas Customs are comparatively narrow: **proof of citizenship/ID for all on board** and **vessel registration/title**, together with the C2A and a Maritime Declaration of Health. By contrast, I did **not** locate an official Bahamas Customs or Immigration rule that expressly makes **insurance, radio licences, or private-yacht safety certificates** mandatory documents for inbound clearance of a visiting foreign private yacht. Those documents remain highly advisable and may be required by marinas, insurers, lenders, or under the yacht's flag-state law, but the official Bahamian arrival guidance located in this research does not list them as core clearance documents for a foreign private pleasure yacht. Commercial and charter regimes are different and do expressly call for additional licensing and, in some cases, insurance and safety documentation. [4]

The biggest practical compliance risks are: **arriving anywhere other than a designated port of entry**, **using a private yacht in a way that makes it commercial/charter**, **landing**

people before permission is granted, **failing to declare firearms**, **overstaying**, and **bringing pets or agricultural items without the right permits or health paperwork**. Some official Bahamas Customs pages still display older fee structures alongside newer 2026 operational guidance. In this report, I treat the newer "General Customs Procedures" cruising-permit page as the best current operational source, but I flag the inconsistency as a live point to confirm before payment. [5]

Legal framework and scope

The principal legal instruments I identified are the **Customs Management Act** and **Customs Management Regulations**, the **Immigration Act** and **Immigration (General) Regulations**, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Visas) Regulations**, the **Import Control (Foods, Plants and Animals) Regulations**, and the boat/charter rules administered by the Port Department. Operationally, the most important current guidance is on the websites of Bahamas Customs Department[6], Bahamas Immigration Department[7], Ministry of Foreign Affairs[8], Department of Agriculture[9], and the Port Department[10]. [11]

The operative customs definition is functional rather than branding-based. Bahamas Customs states that **pleasure vessels are vessels used for pleasure and recreation purposes only**. A vessel used for **commercial purposes or hire** is not a pleasure vessel and is **not** eligible for a temporary cruising permit; it must instead be entered as a commercial vessel on **Form C2**, not C2A. Customs also says a vessel carrying **cargo**, including goods not intended for use on the voyage, loses pleasure-vessel status because those goods must be manifested. That approach is materially consistent with the legal structure in the Customs Regulations. [12]

The commercial/private distinction matters because the Port Department regime separately regulates foreign charter operations. The Port Department's boat-registration rules provide for annual and temporary permits to operate a pleasure boat **commercially** within the Bahamas, and the government's foreign-charter-licence service lists supporting documents including customs documentation, valid insurance coverage, ship registration, valid passports of the ship's masters, and valid mariner's licences. In short: **private visiting yacht** and **charter yacht** are not treated the same. [13]

Private yacht and commercial vessel compared

Question	Private yacht	Charter / commercial yacht
Core use test	Pleasure and recreation only. [14]	Hire, charter, commercial use, or carriage of cargo means it is not a pleasure vessel. [14]
Inward customs form	**C2A** inward declaration and application for cruising permit. [15]	**C2** inward report of vessel. [15]
Main permit	Temporary Cruising Permit **C39**. [16]	Commercial entry plus, for charter, a valid Bahamas foreign charter licence

Question	Private yacht	Charter / commercial yacht
		and transire. [17]
Fishing	Separate foreign pleasure-vessel fishing permit under current 2026 operational guidance. [15]	Sport-fishing also needs fishing licence; dive charter vessels have specific per-person fee. [15]
Passenger embarkation in the Bahamas	Not a commercial carriage regime.	Charter passengers may be transported for hire once licence approved, but the government's boating guidance says passengers **cannot originate in the Bahamas**. [18]

Entry requirements for the yacht and for people on board

Core vessel-entry requirements

For a foreign private yacht arriving **under its own power**, Bahamas Customs currently states the yacht must be imported by a **non-resident**, the importer must **not** be employed in the Bahamas for more than **six months**, and the yacht must **not** be used for commercial purposes or hire. On arrival, the captain must complete **Form C2A** and a **Maritime Declaration of Health**, enter at a **designated port of entry**, present original supporting documents, and pay the applicable fees. After approval, Customs issues the **Temporary Cruising Permit (C39)** and, where applicable, the fishing permit. [19]

The express **supporting documents** listed by Bahamas Customs for this private-yacht entry process are: **proof of citizenship/identification for all on board** and **vessel registration/title**. Customs' current public guidance does **not** expressly list hull insurance, ship radio licence, or private-yacht safety certificates as mandatory arrival documents for a visiting foreign private yacht. Because users often ask for a broader "document set", I separate **documents expressly required for clearance** from **documents strongly advisable to carry** in the matrix below. [15]

Core personal-entry requirements

Under section 22 of the Immigration Act, an immigration officer may grant leave to land and remain only if satisfied, among other things, that the person has a ticket **or some other means of travelling to another country which he will be able to enter**, will not engage in unauthorised gainful occupation, is not likely to behave prejudicially, is not on the stop list, is not suffering from disqualifying contagious disease, and is capable of supporting himself and dependants. If the person does not hold a section 30 permit, the officer may grant a stay for a period **not exceeding eight months**, subject to the officer's determination and any Board directions. The public immigration guidance also says visitors may be asked for evidence of sufficient funds and a valid travel document. [20]

For arrivals by sea, Immigration instructs travellers to complete the **Inward Passenger and Crew Manifest** for everyone aboard. The Immigration Act also empowers officers to require inward passenger and crew lists before passengers or crew land, and the Immigration (General) Regulations require most non-citizens/non-permanent residents to complete an arrival/departure card. [21]

Citizenship and visa rules by broad nationality group

Because you did **not** specify the nationalities of passengers or crew, the table below uses broad groups only. The live visa outcome must still be checked against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs list before sailing, especially for "other" nationalities or mixed-nationality crews. [22]

Nationality group	Short private-yacht visit	Transit / shore leave / yacht arrival note	Longer stay or crew change note
US nationals	Generally visa-free for short visits; US nationals are on the MOFA no-visa list and on Immigration's waiver list. Actual stay is granted by the border officer and may vary; Immigration's public wording says visa waivers apply for visits of up to **three months or eight months as the specific bilateral arrangement dictates**. [23]	For a sea arrival, manifest and border interview still apply; the captain must not allow general landing until permission is given. [24]	If a person needs to remain beyond the period granted, extension should be requested **before** expiry; overstaying is punishable. Working in the Bahamas is a separate permit issue. [25]
UK nationals	Generally visa-free for short visits; UK nationals are on the waiver/no-visa lists. Same caveat on actual stamped stay. [26]	Same process as above for sea arrivals. [27]	Same extension/work-permit points as above. [25]
Canadian nationals	Generally visa-free for short visits; Canada is on the waiver/no-visa lists. Same caveat on actual stamped stay. [26]	Same process as above for sea arrivals. [27]	Same extension/work-permit points as above. [25]
Most EU nationals	Most EU member states appear on the no-visa/waiver lists. The public immigration page still	Same process as above for sea arrivals. [27]	Same extension/work-permit points as above. [25]

Nationality group	Short private-yacht visit	Transit / shore leave / yacht arrival note	Longer stay or crew change note
	frames the period as “three months or eight months as each individual agreement may dictate”, so do not assume one uniform time limit for every EU passport without checking the live list. [28]		
Visa-designated nationalities	Visa generally required before arrival if nationality appears on MOFA’s designated-country list. Visitor-visa service guidance says a visitor visa is usually processed in about **two weeks** and should be lodged at least **two weeks before travel**. [29]	The visa requirement is nationality-driven; I found **no** published private-yacht exception on the current public visa pages for ordinary crew joining a private yacht. [30]	For work or residence in the Bahamas, short-term work permits and work visas are separate. [31]
Indian nationals	Special rule: Indian nationals who hold a visa for, or permanent resident status in, the US, UK, Canada, or Schengen countries do **not** require a Bahamas visa; diplomatic or official Indian passports also do not require a visa. Other Indian nationals do. [32]	Same sea-arrival process otherwise. [27]	Same extension/work-permit points as above. [25]

Crew, transit, short visits, long stays, and crew change

The Immigration Act gives **crew members** a special rule: subject to the officer’s power to prohibit landing, the general landing restriction does not apply to a member of the crew of a ship who lands at a port in the Bahamas while the ship remains at that port, provided it is not for discharge or after discharge. That is the statutory basis for ordinary crew shore leave. However, the same Act also allows an immigration officer to give notice prohibiting a particular person from landing without leave. [33]

That statutory crew privilege creates a real practical ambiguity for **visa-required private-yacht crew**. The current public visa pages are framed broadly for foreign travellers and do not expressly carve out inbound crew on private visiting yachts, while the Act recognises a crew-landing mechanism. My conservative reading is:

- **ordinary crew remaining with the yacht** may rely operationally on the crew-and-manifest framework if Immigration accepts them as crew;
- **crew from visa-designated nationalities**, **crew joining in the Bahamas**, **crew signing off and remaining ashore**, and **crew performing work ashore** present higher risk and should be pre-cleared with Immigration and, where applicable, MOFA; and
- if the activity crosses into "gainful occupation in the Bahamas", the published work-permit system becomes relevant. [34]

For actual **transit** duties, the Immigration (General) Regulations require the master or agent to notify the nearest immigration officer if a person whose destination is outside the Bahamas fails to continue the journey as expected. For air transit, section 21 covers a person landing at an authorised port solely to re-embark and leave from that port while remaining within the limits approved by Immigration. I did **not** locate a detailed modern public rule specifically tailored to "private-yacht crew change" procedures beyond the general entry, crew, and work-permit framework. [35]

For **long stays**, visitors who want to stay beyond the period granted should apply for extension before expiry, and the Immigration Department warns that overstaying is punishable. For residence or work beyond the ordinary visitor framework, official permit categories include **permit to reside**, **short-term work permit** for 1–90 days, and **work permit/work visa** for periods beyond 90 days. The public service guidance says short-term work permits are intended for non-Bahamians who want to work in the Bahamas for **1 to 90 days**, should be submitted **before arrival**, and the government service page says decisions are generally made within **7 days** once accurately and completely submitted. [36]

Document matrix

Document	Expressly required for a visiting foreign private yacht's clearance?	Analytical note
Passports / proof of citizenship / ID for all aboard	**Yes.** Customs says proof of citizenship/ID for all on board; Immigration requires valid travel documents and sea-arrival manifest. [37]	Carry originals for every person.
Vessel registration / title	**Yes.** Customs lists vessel registration/title as supporting documents. [15]	Carry the original registration certificate. If ownership is not obvious from the certificate, carry bill

Document	Expressly required for a visiting foreign private yacht's clearance?	Analytical note
		of sale or other proof of ownership as well. The government's boat-registration services also point to proof of ownership and customs documentation in related contexts. [38]
Form C2A inward declaration	**Yes.** Core pleasure-yacht inward form. [15]	Can be filed through the digital Cruising Permit module before arrival. [39]
Inward passenger and crew manifest	**Yes.** Immigration requires the inward passenger and crew manifest for sea arrivals. [40]	Prepare one clean typed copy and one signed original.
Maritime Declaration of Health	**Yes.** Listed by Customs in the arrival process. [15]	Use it to disclose any illness, death, or relevant health event on board.
Arrival/departure card	**Usually yes** for non-Bahamian arrivals, subject to the Regulations. [41]	Often handled during the Immigration interaction.
Visas	**If nationality requires one.** [22]	Check the live MOFA list; do not assume crew status eliminates visa needs.
Crew ID / seaman's book	**Not expressly listed** in the private-yacht arrival guidance I found.	Strongly advisable for crew-status proof, especially during crew changes.
Proof of ownership separate from registration	**Not expressly listed by Customs** for inbound pleasure-yacht clearance, but often prudent. [42]	Carry bill of sale, deletion certificate, or purchase agreement if title trail is not obvious.
Hull / P&I insurance	**No explicit private-yacht clearance requirement located** in the official arrival pages I found.	Still strongly advisable; foreign charter licensing expressly refers to valid insurance coverage, and many marinas demand it. [43]
Ship radio licence / operator certificate	**No explicit private-yacht clearance requirement located** in the official arrival pages I found.	Carry them anyway as flag-state compliance documents.
Safety certificates	**No explicit private-yacht inbound-clearance**	Bahamas-flag and commercial/charter yacht regimes

Document	Expressly required for a visiting foreign private yacht's clearance?	Analytical note
	requirement located in Customs/Immigration public guidance.	have their own safety-certification structures; those do not automatically translate into a published inbound documentary requirement for a foreign visiting private yacht. [44]
Pets permit and animal health papers	**Yes, if carrying pets.** [45]	See pet section below.

Clearance operations, timelines, fees, and penalties

How arrival actually works

A private yacht must clear at a **designated port of entry**; Bahamas Customs expressly says you may **not** go direct to your own dock and then call Customs. Failure to go first to a port of entry is described by Customs as a breach of the law that can result in **forfeiture** and **fines**. The captain must report directly to Customs, and until Customs and Immigration have cleared the yacht, only the captain may disembark. A useful operational practice at some entry marinas is to hoist the yellow quarantine flag until cleared; that practice appears in major-entry marina guidance, although I did not locate it as an express Customs statutory requirement. [46]

The designated ports of entry for boat arrivals are set out in the Immigration (General) Regulations. The schedule includes, among others, Alice Town[47] in Bimini; Marsh Harbour[48], Green Turtle Cay, Grand Cay, Sandy Point, and Snake Cay in Abaco; Chub Cay[49] and Great Harbour Cay in the Berry Islands; Governor's Harbour and Rock Sound in Eleuthera; George Town[50] in Exuma; West End and Freeport[51] / Gold Rock Creek in Grand Bahama; and Nassau[52] in New Providence, including listed yacht boarding places such as Nassau Yacht Haven, Nassau Harbour Club, East Bay Yacht Basin, Coral Harbour, and Lyford Cay Marina. [53]

Customs now offers a no-login digital route for the cruising-permit process. The declaration should be submitted **before arrival**; it can be edited until paid; after payment, officers can reject it at arrival to allow editing if needed. Even with the digital submission, the yacht still must present physically at a registered port of entry because an officer must board, examine, and clear the vessel into the country. [39]

The following timeline condenses the official process. [54]

```
flowchart TD
    A[Two to four weeks before sailing] --> B[Check each person's visa
status]
```

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    A --> C[If pets: apply for import permit and collect vet records]
    A --> D[If crew will work ashore or change in Bahamas: assess work-permit
need]

    B --> E[Before departure]
    C --> E
    D --> E

    E --> F[Prepare originals: passports, IDs, vessel registration/title,
manifest]
    E --> G[Submit C2A in Cruising Permit Module before arrival]
    E --> H[Select designated port of entry and pre-notify marina if using
one]

    G --> I[Arrival in Bahamas]
    H --> I

    I --> J[Captain reports directly to Customs]
    I --> K[Only captain disembarks until cleared]
    I --> L[Present originals and Maritime Declaration of Health]

    J --> M[Customs/Immigration boarding and clearance]
    M --> N[Receive C39 cruising permit]
    M --> O[Pay passenger tax, anchorage, fishing or other applicable fees]

    N --> P[During stay]
    O --> P

    P --> Q[Observe permit dates and immigration stay limits]
    P --> R[If fishing: renew fishing permit every 30 days if needed]
    P --> S[Apply for extension before permit/stay expires]

    Q --> T[Departure]
    R --> T
    S --> T

    T --> U[If next port needs clearance papers: file outward C28A and pay
outward fee]
```

Current operational fee matrix

The official Bahamas Customs website presently contains both **legacy** and **newer** fee pages. The older “Pleasure Vessels” FAQ page still shows the historic 3-month / 12-month tariff and says the fishing permit is included; the newer “General Customs Procedures” page shows **30-day / 6-month / 12-month** permits, **separate fishing permits**, revised re-entry rules, anchorage fees, and FDCC pricing. Because the newer page is more detailed and explicitly reflects the post-2025 framework, it is the stronger operational source for

current practice, but I recommend confirming the payable total inside the Cruising Permit Module or with Customs before remittance. [55]

Item	Current operational rate located	Source
Temporary Cruising Permit, 30 days, ≤30 ft	$150	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 30 days, >30 to <50 ft	$250	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 30 days, >50 to <100 ft	$350	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 30 days, >100 ft	$600	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 6 months, ≤50 ft	$300	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 6 months, >50 to <100 ft	$750	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 6 months, >100 ft	$2,000	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 12 months, ≤50 ft	$500	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 12 months, >50 to <100 ft	$1,000	[15]
Temporary Cruising Permit, 12 months, >100 ft	$3,000	[15]
Free re-entry	None for 30-day permit; one free re-entry on 6-month permit; two free re-entries on 12-month permit	[15]
Passenger tax	$20 per additional non-resident passenger/crew member aged 6+ above the first three persons	[15]
Anchorage fee if **not** docking at marina, 30-day permit	$50 / $100 / $200 by size band (≤50 ft / >50 to <100 ft / >100 ft)	[15]
Anchorage fee if **not** docking at marina, 6-month permit	$150 / $350 / $1,000 by size band	[15]
Anchorage fee if **not** docking at marina, 12-month permit	$200 / $350 / $1,500 by size band	[15]
Foreign pleasure-vessel fishing permit	$100 under 50 ft; $300 over 50 ft; valid 30 days only	[15]
FDCC, ≤50 ft	$1,500	[56]
FDCC, >50 to <100 ft	$2,500	[56]

Item	Current operational rate located	Source
FDCC, >100 ft	$8,000	[56]
FDCC anchorage fee	$200 / $350 / $1,500 by size band	[56]
Outward clearance (only if next port needs clearance docs)	$75	[2]

Temporary importation and duration

For yachts arriving under their own power, the Customs Regulations allow temporary importation provided the yacht remains non-commercial and the importer meets the residency/employment conditions. Under the Regulations, the yacht must depart within **twelve months** of arrival unless an extension is approved; the legal materials I located show extensions can be approved up to a total maximum of **two years** from arrival. The current Customs website says that after twelve months the Minister may renew the cruising permit on written application for a fee tied to the vessel-size fee structure. [57]

If a yacht arrives **not under its own power**, the process changes. Customs says the importer normally uses **Form C41**, generally through a customs broker, provides a letter of purpose plus vessel particulars and re-export details, furnishes a **CB7 bond**, and receives **Form C42**. That permit is valid for up to **12 months** and the issuance fee is **$50**, separate from the bond and form-preparation costs. [58]

Penalties and enforcement exposure

The immigration and customs sanctions are significant. The Immigration Act makes it unlawful for the master to allow any passenger or crew member to land before permission generally to land has been given by an immigration officer; the ship can be subjected to a **$1,500 lien per passenger** landing contrary to the Act. Illegal-landing offences tied to ships can produce fines of up to **$5,000 per person** for owners or persons in charge, or up to **$3,000** and up to **two years' imprisonment** for others, with forfeiture exposure for the vessel used in the offence. [59]

The Port Department's boat-registration rules also make false or materially misleading declarations punishable by up to **$5,000**, **one year's imprisonment**, or both, and the vessel may be ordered forfeited. Customs specifically warns that failing to present first at a port of entry can result in **forfeiture and fines**. Immigration further states that overstaying is a punishable offence. [60]

Operational issues after entry

Shore leave, inland cruising, fuel, provisioning, and repairs

Once cleared, a private yacht may cruise inter-island under its cruising permit. The outward-clearance requirement for pleasure yachts is now limited: Customs says you only need to clear outward and pay the **$75** outward fee if the next port of destination requires

clearance documents. That said, keep the temporary cruising permit on board because Customs says it must be produced at outward clearance, and officers may inspect declared firearms, ammunition, accessories, and seafood on departure. [2]

On **shore leave**, the important legal line is that crew landing privileges exist only within the immigration framework. Section 21 allows crew landing while the ship remains in port unless Immigration prohibits it, but crew who fail to depart as required can be treated like persons refused leave to land. For passengers and crew alike, if someone is going to **remain ashore**, **change employment**, or **work in the Bahamas**, you move out of the casual cruising framework and toward the permit system. [61]

On **fuel, provisioning, and repairs**, I did **not** locate a yacht-specific official rule giving a broad customs-duty exemption for bunker fuel, chandlery, or repair materials brought into the Bahamas for a foreign private yacht. Customs does say pleasure-vessel exemptions are the same as if you were visiting by air/sea and that anything above entitlement must be duty paid. For agriculture-related provisions, the import-control regime is stricter: any import of food, plant, or animal is controlled by licence, and Customs notes that fruits, vegetables, plants, and flowers require Agriculture permits prior to importation. Accordingly, ordinary bunkering and local chandlery after clearance appear operationally straightforward, but imported stores, agricultural goods, and repair parts may trigger ordinary customs and permit rules unless a specific exemption applies. [62]

The honest bottom line is that **routine provisioning after lawful entry is expected**, but I did **not** find a current Bahamas government page tailored to foreign visiting private yachts that exhaustively answers duty treatment for fuel, spare parts, and outside contractors. Where the amounts are material, or foreign technicians will work ashore, the safer course is advance confirmation from Customs and Immigration. [63]

Customs, quarantine, agricultural restrictions, health, and biosecurity

The current Customs arrival process for pleasure yachts includes a **Maritime Declaration of Health**, and section 22 of the Immigration Act still allows refusal of landing for persons suffering from certain contagious or infectious disease. I found **no current COVID-specific entry requirement** on the current official yacht-entry pages, and the Bahamas' official tourism guidance states that the Bahamas Travel Health Visa and pre-arrival COVID-19 testing were eliminated in June 2022. At the same time, some old Customs pages and archived travel documents still mention COVID travel visas; those should be treated as historical, not current. Yellow-fever vaccination proof is still required for travellers arriving from, or in some cases transiting through, yellow-fever-risk countries. [64]

Agricultural and animal controls are stricter than many cruisers expect. The Import Control (Foods, Plants and Animals) Regulations provide that no person may import any food, plant, or animal into the Bahamas except under a written licence issued by the competent authority. Customs' public material separately notes that fruits, vegetables, and plants/flowers require Agriculture permits prior to importation. That means a prudent

yacht master should **declare** fresh produce, meat, seeds, plants, live animals, and similar biosecurity-sensitive items and assume officers may inspect them. [65]

Pets

The official Agriculture guidance is clear: a valid **import permit** must be in hand **before departure** for live animals entering the Bahamas. The application can take about **48 business hours** once received by the processing unit, but postal submissions can take **6–8 weeks** to arrive, so courier or hand submission is materially safer if time is short. The current domestic-animal application form shows a **$40 processing fee plus VAT** for the first permit, with subsequent permits for the same animal at a lower fee. [66]

For **dogs and cats**, the official requirements include: minimum age **6 months**; vaccination and health records; rabies vaccination within the specified timing window; species-specific vaccine coverage; parasite-free status; veterinary health certificate; microchip; and IMP1(B) signed within **48 hours** prior to arrival by a licensed veterinarian. Animals not meeting import requirements will not be allowed entry and are subject to penalties. The permit is valid for **one entry only** within **one year** from issue unless otherwise stated on the permit. Some breeds are prohibited, including pitbull, Presa Canario, Cane Corso, American Bully, Staffordshire Terrier, and Dogo Argentino, and certain cat breeds/mixes including Savannah, Bengal, and Chausie. Additional CITES information may be required for protected species, and customs duty may apply on permanent entry of animals from outside the Bahamas. [67]

Firearms

A pleasure vessel may bring in a maximum of **three firearms** (inclusive of handguns, rifles, and shotguns up to .308 calibre) and **250 rounds per firearm**. Automatic weapons are prohibited. Customs' current operational guidance adds that open centre-console vessels are not allowed to carry firearms; if firearms are found on vessels deemed unfit, they may be detained at the local police station until departure. Firearms must remain on board unless formally permitted and duty-paid. Failure to declare correctly can result in forfeiture, fines, and potentially imprisonment. [68]

Practical checklists and templates

Pre-departure checklist

Use this as the final pre-sail compliance check for a genuine private yacht entry. It condenses the official rules above. [69]

- Confirm the yacht will be used **only for pleasure/recreation**, not charter, hire, or cargo carriage.
- Confirm the importing owner/master is **not ordinarily resident in the Bahamas** and is **not employed there for more than six months**.
- Prepare originals of:

- passport/ID for every person aboard;
- yacht registration certificate/title;
- supporting ownership proof if registration does not fully show current ownership;
- crew/passenger manifest;
- pet permit and animal records, if applicable.
- Check every nationality against the **live** MOFA visa list.
- If any crew member will **join**, **sign off ashore**, or **work in the Bahamas**, assess whether a short-term work permit or other status is needed.
- If carrying firearms, prepare a written schedule with make, serial number, calibre, and exact ammunition count.
- File the **C2A** through the Cruising Permit Module **before arrival**.
- Select a **designated port of entry** and, if using a marina, pre-notify it.

Arrival-day checklist

This condenses the customs/immigration steps on arrival. [70]

- Proceed directly to a **designated port of entry**.
- Do **not** go directly to a private dock or remote anchorage first.
- Keep everyone aboard except the **captain** until cleared.
- Present:
- C2A record,
- Maritime Declaration of Health,
- passports/ID,
- vessel registration/title,
- inward passenger/crew manifest,
- visa documents where required,
- pet permit/health papers where relevant.
- Pay:
- cruising-permit fee,
- passenger tax if more than three non-resident persons aged 6+,
- anchorage fee if not docking at a marina,
- fishing permit if fishing is planned,
- any officer overtime/attendance charge if applicable.
- Keep the permit packet on board after clearance.

Sample inward crew and passenger manifest template

The official form asks for the basic vessel and traveller particulars shown below. The layout here is a practical drafting template based on the published form. [71]

```
BAHAMAS INWARD PASSENGER AND CREW MANIFEST – PLEASURE SHIP

Port of arrival in the Bahamas:
Date of arrival:
Name of ship:
Where registered:
Owner / operator:
Master's name:
Document no. / registration:
Port of departure:

CREW AND PASSENGER REPORT
---------------------------------------------------------------
Full name | Address | Nationality | Passport no. | Role (crew/passenger)
---------------------------------------------------------------
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Signature of master:
```

Sample marina / customs pre-arrival email

This is not an official form. It is a practical template to support smooth arrival. The need to arrive at a registered port of entry and keep only the captain ashore until clearance is official; the pre-notification itself is operational best practice. [72]

```
Subject: Private yacht arrival request and customs/immigration clearance

Vessel name:
Flag and registration no.:
LOA / beam / draft:
ETA (local Bahamas time):
Port of last departure:
Persons aboard:
Crew nationalities:
Passenger nationalities:
Pets on board:
Firearms on board:
Cruising permit declaration submitted: Yes / No
Requested berth / mooring:
Local contact number / satphone / email:

Please confirm:
1. whether customs and immigration clearance is available on arrival,
2. current office hours / overtime arrangements,
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3. any marina-specific arrival instructions,
4. fuel, water, and waste-disposal availability.
```

Contacts, source dates, and open questions

Key agencies and practical contacts

Contact point	Details	Source
Bahamas Customs Department[73] HQ	Customs House, Thompson Blvd, Nassau. Email: click2clear@bahamas.gov.bs. Phone: (242) 604-3124 / 604-3125.	[74]
Customs marine / temporary imports	Marine Unit: (242) 604-3050. Temporary Imports: (242) 604-3153/4.	[75]
Bahamas Immigration Department[76] HQ / call centre	New Providence. Phone: (242) 225-5337 / 322-7530-5. Director contact listed separately in Nassau.	[77]
Immigration director / Nassau	Director of Immigration, Mount Royal House, Nassau. Tel: 242-322-7530.	[78]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs[79] / Consular Division	Consular Division contact: (242) 397-9300; eVisa office email shown as evisaoffice@bahamas.gov.bs; ministry contact at Goodman's Bay Corporate Centre also published.	[80]
Department of Agriculture[81] Veterinary Services Unit	Darville’s Complex, Gladstone & Munnings Roads, New Providence. Tel: (242) 397-7450/1.	[82]

Useful first-arrival ports and official local contacts

Port / island	Customs	Immigration	Source
Alice Town[47] / Bimini	Customs main office & public dock: 347-3100/02; South Bimini & airport: 347-3101.	Immigration Alice Town Office: (242) 347-3446; biminiimmi@bahamas.gov.bs.	[83]
Marsh Harbour[48] / Abaco	Customs main office: 367-2308; public dock: 367-2525; airport: 367-2026.	Immigration Marsh Harbour International Airport: (242) 367-2536 / 2675 or 365-8604.	[84]
George Town[50] / Exuma	Customs dock main office: 336-2072; airport: 345-0071.	Immigration Exuma office: (242) 336-2569.	[85]
Chub Cay[49]	Customs Great	Immigration Chub Cay email:	[83]

Port / island	Customs	Immigration	Source
	Harbour Cay dock: 367-8566 (Berry Islands official Customs listing).	chubcaygeneral@bahamas.gov.bs.	
Nassau[52] / New Providence	Harbour Office: (242) 604-3342; Customs HQ numbers above.	Immigration HQ / New Providence numbers above.	[86]
Freeport[51] / Grand Bahama	Local Customs contacts are on the Customs contact page; for immigration, office is at Freeport.	Immigration Freeport main office: (242) 602-9700.	[87]

Major entry marinas with published clearance guidance

Marina	Published practical note	Source
entity["local_business","Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina","Alice Town, Bimini, Bahamas"]	Says it is a designated port of entry with Customs on site and Immigration across the street; states only the captain may leave the vessel until cleared; states standard clearance hours 8 am–6 pm, subject to change.	[88]
Palm Cay[89]	Published customs-and-immigration page for marina users; marina contact shown as +1 (242) 822-3481.	[90]
Resorts World Bimini Marina[91]	Publishes that officials can be arranged on-site through the dockmaster, including holiday / after-hours overtime arrangements.	[92]

Key source dates

The key sources relied on in this report are dated as follows, using the date shown on the source where available and otherwise noting that the page is current/undated as accessed on **28 April 2026**:

Source	Date shown
Customs Management (Amendment) Regulations, 2025 and 2025 (No. 4)	2025 amending regulations. [93]
Customs operational “General Customs Procedures” cruising-	Undated public webpage; content reflects 2026 fee structure and was accessed 28 Apr 2026. [15]

Source	Date shown
permit page	
Customs “Pleasure Vessels” FAQ page	Public webpage with older/legacy fee language, accessed 28 Apr 2026. [94]
Immigration Act / Immigration (General) Regulations	Consolidated law texts, LRO editions visible in source. [95]
Immigration “Before Your Arrival” page	Public webpage; search engine metadata showed it was published about 7.8 years before access. [96]
MOFA visa list page	Current public webpage, undated in displayed content, accessed 28 Apr 2026. [32]
MOFA eVisa portal page	Current public webpage, accessed 28 Apr 2026. [97]
Bahamas visitor-visa service page	Search-result snippet current at access; states usual two-week processing. [98]
Animal Import Requirements PDF	PDF hosted on government CDN; page text notes “Reviewed June 2018”, file posted on current government site. [99]
Domestic animal import application form	Rev. July 2023. [100]
Official tourism COVID update	15 June 2022 press statement; current tourism FAQ also states COVID health visa/testing eliminated. [101]

Open questions and limitations

There are several areas where the official public materials are either incomplete or internally inconsistent, and they should be treated with care:

- **Current fees:** the Bahamas Customs website still displays both older and newer fee tables. The newer “General Customs Procedures” page appears to reflect current 2026 practice, but some older FAQ pages remain live. Confirm the total in the Cruising Permit Module or directly with Customs before paying. [55]
- **Visa-required private-yacht crew:** the statute gives crew-landing privileges, but the public visa pages do not clearly carve out a visa exemption for private-yacht crew of designated nationalities. This is the single most important grey area for mixed-nationality private-yacht crews and crew changes; prudent operators should obtain written clarification in advance where nationality risk exists. [102]
- **Insurance, radio licences, and safety certificates:** I did not locate a current official Bahamas Customs/Immigration page making these express private-yacht inbound-clearance requirements for a foreign visiting pleasure yacht. That is **not** the same as saying they are unnecessary under other laws, contracts, or flag-state rules. [103]

- **Fuel, repair parts, and foreign contractors:** I found no fully current yacht-specific government page that comprehensively explains customs treatment for bunkers, repair materials, or outside technicians on a visiting private yacht. For higher-value repairs or shore-based contractor work, obtain case-specific guidance from Customs and Immigration. [63] map

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[1] [4] [7] [8] [12] [14] [15] [17] [19] [27] [37] [42] [48] [51] [52] [56] [58] [64] [69] [70] [72] [81] [89] [91] [103] GENERAL CUSTOMS PROCEDURES - The Bahamas Customs Department

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