



When is a permit required for a fireworks display in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area?

Under the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 and the Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 (Qld) no permission is required for low impact activities conducted in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth) and Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (State) that do not involve the taking of plants, animals or marine products in all zones except for Preservation Zones and Remote Natural Areas.

The extent to which fireworks displays are characterised as being of low impact on the Marine Parks depends on a number of factors, including the duration, potential impact on other users and potential impact on sensitive wildlife such as birds and marine turtles.

Provided the following conditions are met, a fireworks display will be considered a low impact activity and will therefore not require a permit (but will require notification).

General conditions

- The fireworks display is not conducted adjacent to an island or mainland National Park.
- The proponent notifies the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service at least five business days prior to a fireworks display proposed within the Marine Parks by email at: permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au.
- The fireworks display is conducted in accordance with the Queensland [code of conduct – control of outdoor fireworks displays](#).
- Where relevant, adjacent landholders are notified and reasonable attempts are made to address any concerns raised.
- A maximum of four fireworks displays may be conducted by any one person, group or organisation in any one location per calendar year ('location' means on or adjacent to a particular island or mainland beach or foreshore).
- A fireworks display does not exceed:
 - 10 minutes if adjacent to any island
 - 20 minutes if adjacent to developed areas on the mainland (e.g. Cairns Esplanade).
- Only minimal debris and biodegradable effects are used.

- Fireworks debris surrounding the firing platform (within a 30–100 metre radius, depending on wind or weather) is collected immediately following a fireworks display (via a vessel-based spotlight search where necessary).
- Any structure, facility or vessel (including a barge) used as part of a fireworks display is covered for the use under a valid Marine Parks permit.

Wildlife conditions

A risk assessment should be conducted to identify the risk and to develop strategies to minimise disturbance to native wildlife. Advice should be sought from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to inform the risk assessment and mitigation measures.

The following conditions apply:

- The fireworks display is not conducted in the vicinity of a significant bird nesting or roosting site (such that it would cause disturbance).
- For known significant sea turtle nesting sites, the fireworks display does not occur during the turtle nesting/hatching season.
- All reasonable attempts are made to minimise the potential impacts on native wildlife from a fireworks display, including but not limited to:
 - nesting or roosting shorebirds, in particular the beach-stone curlew
 - flying fox colonies
 - other local native wildlife such as wallabies.

If any of the above conditions cannot be met then a permit may be required. For further information and application information, contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority or Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Any assessment of applications will consider whether there are other prudent or feasible alternatives to conducting the activities within the Marine Parks.

Permit applications for fireworks displays (tailored assessments) can take up to 50 business days to be assessed.

For more information

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
assessments@gbmpa.gov.au

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
permitsGBR@des.qld.gov.au