

TURKISH YACHT LAW

Yachting in Türkiye

Türkiye is a highly suitable maritime country for yachting, thanks to its approximately 8,500 km of coastline, particularly the turquoise bays along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. The southwestern coasts of Türkiye, specifically between the ports/cities of İzmir and Antalya, have an international reputation in yachting. In this context, tourism centres such as Kuşadası, Didim, Marmaris, Bodrum, Göcek, Datça, Antalya, Fethiye, and Kaş are well-known points in both national and international yachting. Additionally, this coastal region hosts numerous ancient ports, shipyards, villages from the Roman period, and countless unique culinary destinations in Aegean villages.



Türkiye is also a significant country in Aegean and Mediterranean yachting with many marinas meeting international standards. These facilities, classified as three, four, and five-anchor marinas, are large tourism facilities designed to both accommodate yachts on land for wintering and meet the social and technical needs of yacht owners & passengers. However, marinas in Bodrum and Marmaris are even equipped to service superyachts and megayachts.

Yachts & Marinas in Turkish Maritime Law

Turkish law includes two main regulations regarding yachts and marinas: the Tourism Encouragement Code and the Marine Tourism Regulation. The Tourism Encouragement Code provides general rules on private yachts & yachting, commercial yachting/chartering, and marinas such as establishing, operators, insurance while detailed provisions are outlined in the Regulation. Additionally, legal issues such as yacht mortgages, yacht seizure/arresting, yacht sales & purchase, collision and registration/flag are addressed in the maritime trade section of the Turkish Commercial Code Nr. 6102.

If a foreign individual wishes to register a private yacht for the Turkish flag, regardless of the yacht's size, the owner must have a residence permit. For commercial yachts, a foreigner residing in Türkiye or a foreigner establishing a company under Turkish law can register the yacht in the Turkish International Ship Registry (TUGS) and benefit from tax advantages.



Under Turkish law, foreign-flagged private yachts for leisure, sports, or recreation can stay in Turkish Waters for up to five years for cruising, maintenance, repair or wintering purposes. The stay of foreign-flagged private yachts at certified marine tourism facilities (marinas) can be extended by the Ministry for an additional five years. On a different subject, yacht construction/building contracts are not specifically regulated under Turkish (civil/obligation) law. Thus, a yacht construction contract between a Turkish shipyard and foreign customer wishing to build a yacht in Türkiye such as in Antalya, Tuzla, or Gebze can be freely made according to the Turkish Code of Obligations' general provisions on construction contracts or according to the law of another country (e.g., German or English law) under choice of law. The same applies to short-term, annual, or wintering berthing/mooring contracts or boat maintenance/repair contracts between Turkish marina and a yacht owner.

Superyachts and Megayachts

Turkish law distinguishes between private and commercial yachts. However, private yachts under 24 meters in length are classified as private boats, while those over 24 meters are considered private yachts in a legal sense. Generally, the term "private yacht" encompasses sailing yachts, motor yachts, catamarans, superyachts, and megayachts that are not used for commercial purposes.

Superyachts and megayachts are not specifically defined in Turkish maritime law. Only commercial yachts over 39 meters are referred to as megayachts, and operating such yachts in Turkish territorial waters is subject to special conditions. Accordingly, all legal regulations related to both private and commercial yachts apply to superyachts and megayachts as well.

Aksoy Law Firm

About

Aksoy Law Firm provides expert legal assistance and attorney services in Turkish yachts and marinas law, particularly in the fields of superyachts and megayachts. Our firm is prepared to offer high-level legal services ranging from protecting clients' interests in yacht construction contracts to yacht management or chartering. AKSOY handle all matters related to yachts, including registration, seizure/arresting, flagging, marina accidents, yacht insurances, fires, collisions, theft, coast guard/harbour master inspections, port authority procedures, yacht construction contracts & yacht mortgages, transit log issues, fuel supplies, and more. Feel free to contact us for any yacht & marina related legal concerns in Türkiye.

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