





Building norms for coastal zones



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Coastal Regulation Zone norms in India

Coastal Stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwaters which are influenced by tidal action (in the landward side) up to 500 metres from the High Tide Line (HTL) and the land between the Low Tide Line (LTL) and the HTL, are classified under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ).

Prohibited activities

- Setting up new industries and expanding existing ones, except those directly related to the waterfront or directly needing foreshore facilities, and projects of the Department of Atomic Energy.
- Setting up and expanding units for the disposal of waste and effluents. Exceptions include storm water drains, and facilities required for discharging treated effluents.
- Dumping of city or town waste for the purposes of land filling or otherwise.

- Mining of sand, rocks, and other substrata materials.

- Construction activities in CRZ -I areas, except as specified in Annexure -I of the notification

Classifications of CRZ areas

Coastal stretches within 500 metres of the HTL on the landward side are classified into four categories, namely:

Category I (CRZ-I)

a.) Areas that are ecologically sensitive and important, such as national parks/marine parks, sanctuaries, reserve forests, wildlife habitats, mangroves, corals/coral reefs, areas close to breeding and spawning grounds of fish and other marine life, areas of outstanding natural beauty/historically/heritage areas, areas rich in genetic diversity, areas likely to be inundated due to rise in sea level consequent upon global warming, and such other areas as may be declared by the central government or the concerned authorities at the state/union territory level from time to time.

b.) Areas between the LTL and HTL.

Category-II (CRZ-II)

This category includes areas that have already been developed up to or close to the shoreline. For this purpose, the term 'developed area' is used for areas within municipal limits or in other legally designated urban areas that are already substantially built up and have been provided with drainage, approach roads, and other infrastructural facilities.

Category-III (CRZ-III)

Areas that are relatively undisturbed and do not belong to the first two categories. These will include coastal zones in rural areas (developed and undeveloped), areas within municipal limits, or in legally designated urban areas that are not substantially built up.

Category-IV (CRZ-IV)

Coastal stretches in the Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep and small islands, except those designated as CRZ-I, CRZ-II, or CRZ-III.

Norms for regulation of activities

Development activities in different categories of CRZ areas shall be regulated in accordance with the following norms:

CRZ-I

Department of Atomic Energy, and (b) pipelines, conveying systems including transmission lines, (c) exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas

CRZ-II

Buildings shall be permitted only on the landward side of the existing road or on the landward side of existing authorised structures. These buildings will be subject to the existing local town and country planning regulations including the existing norms of floor space index (FSI)/floor area ratio (FAR).

CRZ-III

(i) Areas up to 200 metres from the HTL have to be earmarked as a 'No Development Zone'. The following uses, however, may be permissible in this zone: Agriculture, horticulture, gardens, pastures, parks, play fields, forestry, and salt manufacturing from sea water.

(ii) Vacant plots between 200 and 500 metres of the HTL in designated areas of CRZ-III can be developed with prior approval from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF).

(iii) The construction/reconstruction of dwelling units between 200 and 500 metres of the HTL permitted if they are within the ambit of traditional rights and customary uses such as existing fishing villages. Building permissions for such construction/reconstruction will be subject to the conditions that the total number of dwelling units shall not be more than twice the number of existing units, the total covered area on all floors shall not exceed 33 per cent of the plot size, the overall height of construction shall not exceed 9 metres, and the construction shall not be more than 2 floors (ground plus one). Construction is allowed for permissible activities under the notification including facilities essential for such activities.

(iv). Reconstruction/alterations of an existing authorised building permitted subject to (i) to (iii) above.

CRZ-IV

Andaman & Nicobar Islands:

(i) No new construction shall be permitted within 200 metres of the HTL.

(ii) Buildings between 200 and 500 metres from the HTL shall not have more than 2 floors (ground and first floor), the total covered area on all floors shall not be more than 50 per cent of the plot size, and the total height of construction shall not exceed 9 metres.

Lakshadweep and small islands:

(i) For permitting construction, the distance from the HTL shall be decided depending on the size of the islands. This shall be decided in consultation with the experts and with approval of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, keeping in view the land use

(ii) Buildings within 500 metres from the HTL shall not have more than 2 floors, the total covered area shall not be more than 50 per cent of the plot, and the total height shall not exceed 9 metres.

The writer is a Chennai-based advocate and author of 'Property Registration, Land Records and Building Approval Procedures Followed in Various States in India'

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