

# Baseline

**Description** - The line from which maritime zones are measured. The normal baseline for measuring the territorial sea (TS), contiguous zone (CZ), exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf is the low-water line along the coast.

**Primary Agency** – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service, Office of the Coast Survey.

**Spatial Extent** - Average of lower low tides (i.e., ordinary low water), or closing lines (i.e., bays and rivers), as depicted on the largest scale NOAA nautical chart for a region.

**Description** - Presidential Proclamation No. 5928. 3 C.F.R. Sect. 547 (1989). The 1958 Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone arts. 3-13; the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) arts. 5-11, 13-14. The U.S. is not a party to the LOSC but recognizes it as reflecting customary international law, as provided in Presidential Proclamation 5030.

**Official Depiction** – Baseline "marked large-scale charts officially recognized by the coastal States" (LOSC art. 5). "State" refers to nation-state or sovereign state and, in the U.S., official charts are NOAA nautical charts.

**Known Digital Data Source** - None available for web site at this time. The data is currently under official review and will be released at a future date.

**Notes** - [Actual] Baselines are ambulatory and subject to changes as the shoreline accretes and erodes. The normal baseline from which the maritime zones are charted may be synonymous with the coastline under the Submerged Lands Act (SLA). See specific laws and notices the application of various laws that use baselines and boundaries.

**Issues** - See M. Reed, Vol. 3 Shore and Sea Boundaries; and A. Shalowitz Vols. 1&2 Shore and Sea Boundaries.