

Fact Sheet for Municipal Beach Operators: BEACH SAMPLING

WATER SAMPLING IS REQUIRED

As of May 2008, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care under the authority of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* now requires the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) to receive routine beach/swimming area water samples from all municipally owned beaches, public beaches, and recreation camps in the NWHU jurisdiction.

Sampling is conducted to prevent or reduce the cases of water-borne illness and injury related to recreational water use at municipal beaches, public beaches, and recreation camps.

Sampling shall take place weekly throughout the swimming season of the beach. Samples shall be collected by a trained NWHU employee and submitted to a Public Health Laboratory for further testing.

ROLE OF THE NORTHWESTERN HEALTH UNIT

The Northwestern Health Unit conducts pre-season assessments of each municipal beach, public beach, and recreation camp. These assessments are conducted on a yearly basis prior to the onset of regular testing.

Assessments include:

- Mapping and inspection of the beach/swimming areas;
- Surveillance and inspections of the beach/swimming areas;
- Weekly water sampling of the beach/swimming areas;
- Weekly transport of the water samples to the NWHU and submission to a Public Health Laboratory for further testing;
- Posting of signage at beach/swimming areas in the event of an adverse water result or probable health hazard;

- Retesting the beach/swimming areas in the event of an adverse water result;
- Weekly notification to the municipality regarding weekly results, adverse results, and conditions.
- Media releases in the event of an adverse result.

ROLE OF THE MUNICIPAL OPERATOR

The municipal operator will be responsible for general surveillance, maintenance and clean up of the beach. Responsibilities of the operator include:

- Surveillance and inspection of the beach/swimming areas;
- Surveillance and clean up of debris and any potential hazards located on or around the beach/swimming areas;
- Surveillance and inspection of the beach/swimming area's signage;
- Resurrection of barriers and/or supervision of the beach in the event of a "beach closure";
- Responsibility to contact a Public Health Inspector at the NWHU in the event of any changes or concerns regarding the beach/swimming areas, changes in water quality, and symptoms of rash, itch, or illness associated with recreational water.



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FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE BEACH WATER QUALITY

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION	INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED
Commercial / Industrial (liquid waste discharges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature of effluent • surface runoff • continuous or intermittent flow • points of discharge
Municipal (separate and combined sewer systems, sewage treatment plant bypasses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of outfalls and storm relief overflow points • periods of activity • estimated intensity and duration of rainfall
Sanitary Landfills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location • surface runoff or leachate • points of discharge
Private Sewage Disposal Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location • points of discharge
Agricultural / Horticultural (municipal sludge utilization, manure spreading, spray irrigation of liquid wastes, concentrated feedlots, livestock pasturing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site of activity • proximity to surface water body • nature of effluent • continuous or intermittent • points of discharge
Waterfowl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locations where flocks gather • estimate of flock size • duration of stay
Beach Aesthetics (algae, dead fish, oily scum, and other debris)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deleterious or objectionable substance and conditions
Meteorological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rainfall intensity, duration and territorial coverage • mean air and water temperatures • direction of normal and wind induced water currents • historical data for beach which would facilitate prediction of rough water effects on water quality and duration of poor water quality due to turbulence • reduced stream flow
Bather Loads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • estimate of number of beach users each day

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