

	Manual: Environmental Health Services
	Number: 8000.001
Prepared By: David Brummond	Effective Date: Immediately (3-16-11)
Authorized By: Rick Merrifield, Director	Supersedes: NEW
TITLE: Ocean Water Monitoring Program : Beach Closure	

AUTHORITY:

Health & Safety Code, Section 115885 Title 17, California Code of Regulations, Grp. 10, Art. 4, Section 7961

POLICY:

Section 115885(f) of the California Health & Safety Code states that in the event of an untreated sewage release that is known to have reached recreational waters adjacent to a public beach, the local health officer shall immediately close those waters until it has been determined by the local Health Officer that the waters are in compliance with established bacteriological standards. In addition, Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 7961(d) requires the local Health Officer to close a beach (or parts of it) or otherwise restrict its use by the public. Closure or use restrictions are to remain until the source of the sewage release is eliminated and bacteriological monitoring indicates that the water is safe for recreational contact.

A beach will be “Closed” when it has been determined that there is a likely health risk for persons engaging in water contact activities due to a known incident of sewage contamination or as directed by the Health Officer. In the event that sewage is discharged to a stormdrain or creek that flows to the ocean and the following conditions exist:

- * The volume of sewage discharged into the creek is 1000 gal. or more,
- * There is surface water flow in the creek channel,
- * The water/sewage flows unimpeded to the surf zone

EHS will close the beach impacted by the sewage release regardless of the distance from the point where the sewage entered the creek or stormdrain to the beach. Actions to be taken when the discharge to the creek is less than 1000 gallons will be determined on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the program supervisor and or EHS Director.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures are to be followed by Environmental Health Service:

When it is determined that closing a beach is necessary, EHS will post signs that read “KEEP OUT.” Sewage contaminated water. Contact with water may cause illness.” These signs will be posted in the affected area and will remain posted until sampling indicates that the affected recreational waters meet applicable bacteriological standards. Reports of hazardous materials (chemical contamination) discharges affecting the beach and surf zone are investigated by the Hazardous Material Program of the County Fire Dept. EHS will consult with the investigating agency to determine if there is a need to close the affected beach.

Beaches contaminated with or threatened by a nearby sewage discharge (untreated or partially treated sewage not meeting the Waste Discharge Requirements of the Water Quality Control Board) shall be closed a minimum of 48 hours and shall be kept closed until test results indicate that bacteria levels are within applicable standards.

Guidelines for closure are:

Less than 1,000 gallons	¼ mile each side of discharge
1,000 – 10,000 gallons	¼ - ½ mile each side of discharge
10,000 – 100,000 gallons	¾ - 1 mile each side of discharge
100,000 to one million gallons	2 – 3 miles each side of discharge
1 – 2 million gallons	4 – 5 miles each side of discharge
> 2 million gallons	Minimum 5 miles each side of discharge

Posting the Beach

In the event that sewage contaminates water adjacent to a public beach, a Press Release alerting the public will be issued by the Director of Environmental Health Services. In accordance with Title 17, Sect 7961, signs warning the public to avoid contact with the water will be posted along the affected beach 25 yds on either side of the discharge point and the every 100 yds for the following distances:

Less than 1,000 gallons	¼ mile each side of discharge
1,000 – 10,000 gallons	¼ - ½ mile each side of discharge
10,000 – 100,000 gallons	¾ - 1 mile each side of discharge
> 100,000 gallons	2 – 3 miles each side of discharge

In addition, signs will be posted at appropriate points of public entry to the beach as determined in the field and or after consulting with the program supervisor.

Criteria to Re-open a Beach

A public beach that is closed to recreational water contact as a result of a sewage spill may be re-opened after 2 water samples that are collected 24 hrs apart, meet State standards for Fecal coliform and the ratio of fecal to total coliform.. The current standards are:

- Fecal coliform less than 400 MPN per 100 ml sample
- The ratio of Fecal to total coliform less than 0.1 when total coliform exceeds 1000 MPN per 100 ml sample.

Sample point guidelines in relation to sewage spill size:

1,000 gallons or less	At the discharge point to the ocean and 100 yds down-current.
1,000 – 10,000 gallons	At the discharge point to the ocean, 100 yds upcurrent and every 100 yds for ¼ mi. downcurrent of the spill.
100,000 one million gallons	At the sewage spill, ¼ mi., ½ mi in each direction.