



EPA's BEACH Report: New Jersey 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

Introduction

The BEACH Act of 2000 requires that coastal and Great Lakes states and territories report to EPA on beach monitoring and notification data for their coastal recreation waters. The BEACH Act defines coastal recreation waters as the Great Lakes and coastal waters (including coastal estuaries) that states, territories, and authorized tribes officially recognize or designate for swimming, bathing, surfing, or similar activities in the water.

This fact sheet summarizes beach monitoring and notification data submitted to EPA by the State of New Jersey for the 2009 swimming season.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been monitoring coastal recreational bathing beaches since 1974 with the participation of local environmental health agencies. Water quality samples are collected once a week at 241 ocean and bay beaches and analyzed for enterococci bacteria.

In addition to water quality monitoring, DEP's Water Monitoring and Standards Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring performs aerial surveillance of nearshore coastal waters. These surveillance flights enable the evaluation of coastal water quality and the assessment of the nature and extent of public reports of ocean pollution. Surveillance flights continue to record a decrease in the quantity of floatable trash and debris in the coastal waterways compared to the years prior to 1990.

Updated beach conditions and water quality results are posted each day from Memorial Day through Labor Day on the DEP web site (www.njbeaches.org) and on the phone at 1-800-648-SAND.

Figure 1. New Jersey coastal counties.



Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ATLANTIC	48	48	0
CAPE MAY	69	69	0
MONMOUTH	58	58	0
OCEAN	66	66	0
TOTALS	241	241	0

2009 Summary Results

How many notification actions were reported and how long were they?

When bacteria results exceed the standard of 104 enterococci per 100 mL of sample, New Jersey's approach is to resample to confirm the result. If a second sample exceeds the standard, the beach is closed until additional monitoring shows that bacteria levels are again within the standard. Sample results are posted on the DEP web site. A total of 18 monitored beaches had at least one notification action issued during the 2009 swimming season. All but one of New Jersey's 170 notification actions lasted one day or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For New Jersey's 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 0.6 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly impact investigated monitored beaches?

In 2009, New Jersey reports that the majority of beach closings are caused by contaminated stormwater following periods of intense rainfall. All beach samples with results above the standard are followed by a sanitary survey investigation at that beach.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:
www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in New Jersey:
www.njbeaches.org or 1-800-648-SAND

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

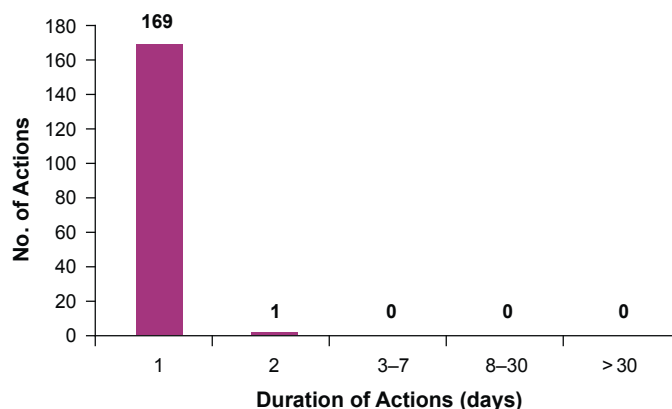


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

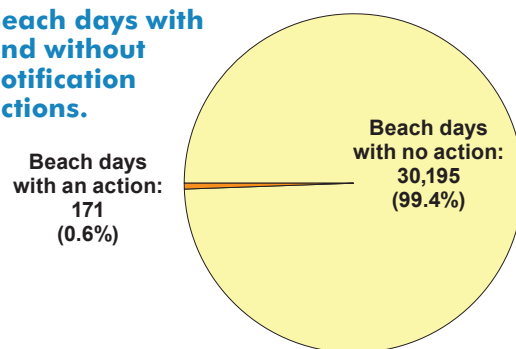


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007–2009.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of monitored beaches	264	260	241
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	15	14	18
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	6%	5%	7%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	0.4%	0.3%	0.6%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (11 beaches).

