

EPA's BEACH Report: Pennsylvania 2012 Swimming Season

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Introduction

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 authorizes EPA to provide grants to coastal and Great Lakes states, territories, and eligible tribes to monitor their coastal beaches for bacteria that indicate the possible presence of disease-causing pathogens and to notify the public when there is a potential risk to public health. The BEACH Act requires that recipients of those grants report their coastal beach monitoring and notification data to EPA. This fact sheet highlights the data submitted to EPA by Pennsylvania for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Pennsylvania monitored 13 coastal beaches in one county during the 2012 swimming season (Figure 1 and Table 1). When monitoring results at swimming beaches show that levels of specific indicator bacteria in the water exceed applicable water quality standards, Pennsylvania officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

Figure 1. Pennsylvania coastal county

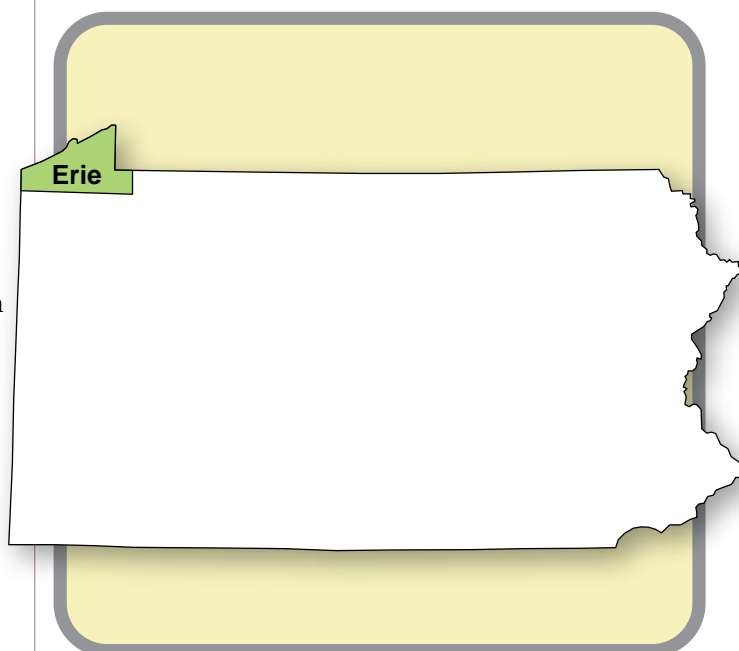


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ERIE	13	13	0
TOTALS	13	13	0

Figure 2: Percent of beaches with one or more notification actions

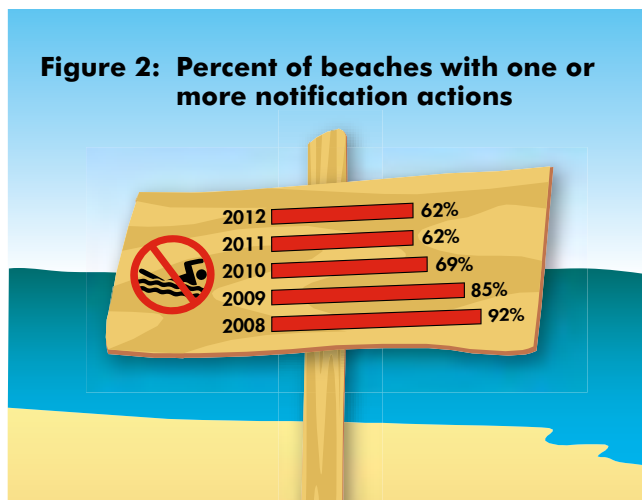
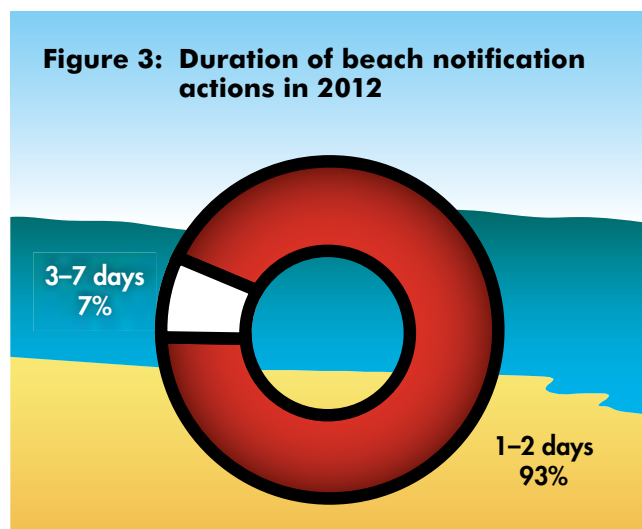


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the thirteen coastal beaches that Pennsylvania monitored, eight (62 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2).

How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

Pennsylvania issued 41 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Pennsylvania lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (93 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (Figure 3).

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with notification actions

Figure 4: Percent of beach days open and safe for swimming



to better track trends over time. Total available beach days are determined by multiplying the length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 1,300 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 13 monitored Pennsylvania beaches. Pennsylvania reported notification actions on 66 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 95 percent of the time. This continues the trend of high percentages of open beach days at beaches in Erie County, PA (Figure 4).

For More Information

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For general information about beaches visit:
<http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/>.

For information about a specific beach visit:
<http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2/>.