

EPA's BEACH Report: California 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 the State of California for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

California monitored 414 coastal beaches in 17 counties 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, California officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 414 coastal beaches that California monitored, 152 (37 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2). This is approximately the same as in previous years.

Figure 1. California coastal counties



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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ALAMEDA	2	2	0
CONTRA COSTA	1	1	0
DEL NORTE	12	12	0
HUMBOLT	29	29	0
LOS ANGELES	49	49	0
MARIN	20	20	0
MENDOCINO	20	20	0
MONTEREY	24	24	0
ORANGE	22	22	0
SAN DIEGO	67	67	0
SAN FRANCISCO	7	7	0
SAN LUIS OBISPO	16	16	0
SAN MATEO	43	43	0
SANTA BARBARA	34	34	0
SANTA CRUZ	27	27	0
SONOMA	7	7	0
VENTURA	34	34	0
TOTALS	414	414	0

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

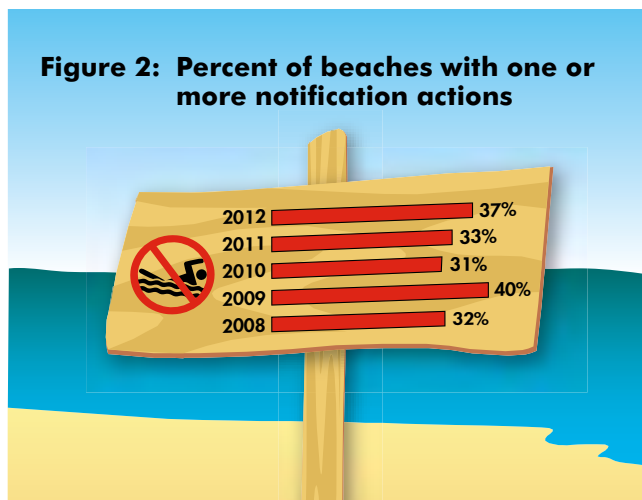
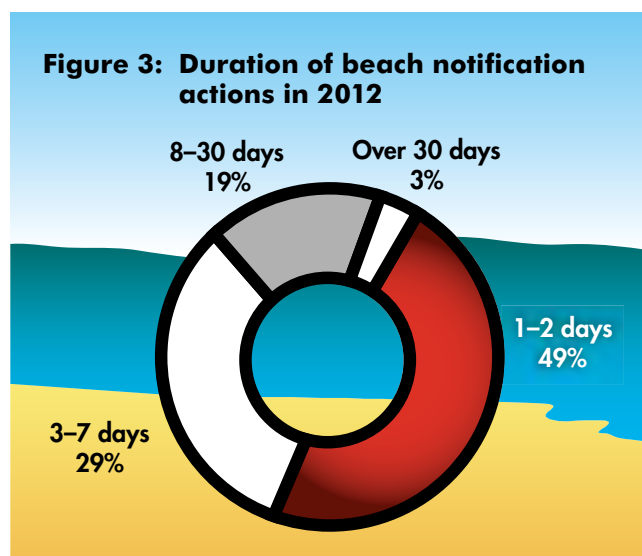


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



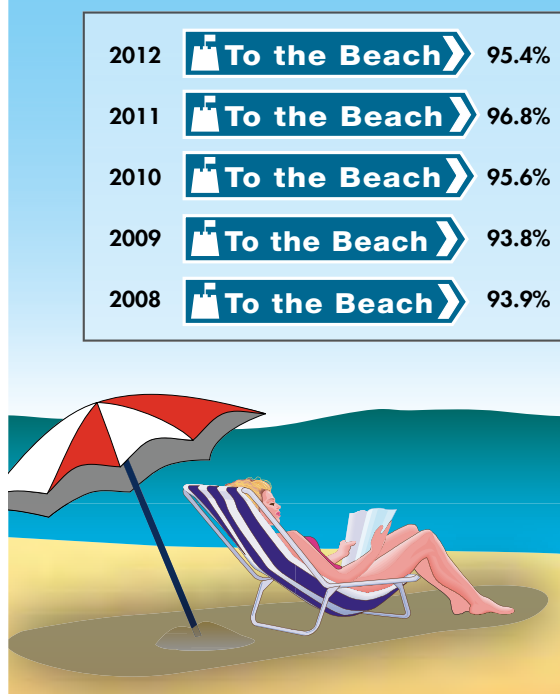
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

California issued 759 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically California lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (78 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within a week or less (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 to better track trends over time. Total available beach days are determined by multiplying the

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



length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 128,913 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 414 monitored California beaches. California reported notification actions on 5,952 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming approximately 95 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in California (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/>.