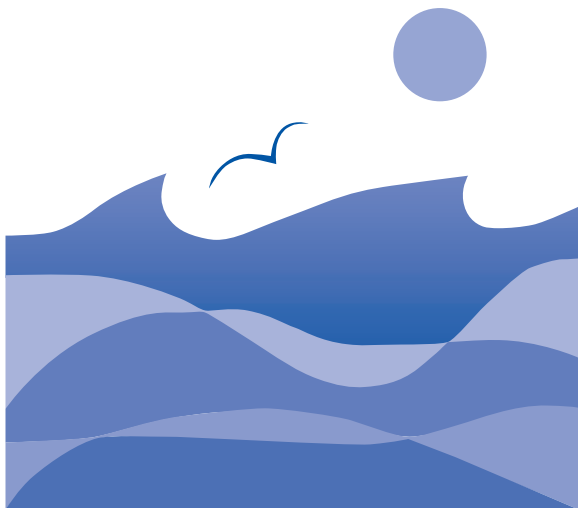




Ocean Water Quality Monitoring Program



County of Ventura
Environmental Health Division
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009-1730

Ocean Water Quality Monitoring Program (OWQMP)

Background

In September 1998, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors established a program in the Environmental Health Division (EHD) to monitor the bacteriological quality of ocean water at Ventura County beaches.

The Program

EHD's OWQMP staff provides the public with information about ocean water quality via a telephone hotline, website, and press release. Weekly ocean water samples are collected and tested for certain bacteria that indicate the potential for increased risk to human health. Sample results are compared with State standards for ocean water quality.

If a sample result fails to comply with one or more of these State standards, the beach is posted with signs warning the public to avoid body contact with the ocean water. This information is also available on the EHD telephone hotline, website, and in press releases distributed to the media.

The health warning stays in effect for the beach until resampling indicates that the water meets State standards.

Common symptoms associated with exposure to ocean water of poor bacteriological quality include:

- ◆ vomiting, diarrhea, nausea
- ◆ fever, chills
- ◆ ear, nose, throat irritation
- ◆ skin rash

If you experience any of these symptoms, or otherwise become ill after visiting the beach, contact your doctor and the County Public Health Department, Communicable Disease Control Section (CDCS). Also, please complete the illness report form available on EHD's OWQMP website.

EHD's OWQMP website includes up-to-date information on ocean water quality. It also contains regional and detailed maps of sampling locations, a list of beach postings, and weekly sampling results data.

Storm Drains and Runoff Water

EHD's OWQMP staff is also responsible for alerting the public about possible health risks from contact with storm drain water and runoff that flows onto beaches from pipes, culverts, rivers, creeks, and streams.

Storm drain water and runoff can carry disease causing bacteria to the ocean. Therefore, as a general precaution, you should avoid body contact with storm drain water, runoff, and the ocean near storm drains.

Permanent warning signs are posted at specific storm drains along the coast to remind you of this risk. Check EHD's OWQMP website for locations.

Important OWQMP Phone Numbers and Website Information

Telephone Hotline*
805/662-6555

OWQMP Website*
www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth/programs/tech_serv/ocean/index.html

OWQMP Coordinator*
805/654-3524

**Ventura County Public Health Department
CDCS**
805/981-5101

* Information about ocean water quality at Ventura County beaches is updated throughout the week and provided on the telephone hotline and the OWQMP webpage.



