

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Data User Corner: eBeaches Enables Fast and Secure Transmission of Beach Water Quality and Swimming Advisory Information

What is *eBeaches*?

eBeaches is an online process for coastal and Great Lakes states to electronically transmit beach water quality and swimming advisory information to EPA. The process is part of a national effort to ensure the safe enjoyment of America's beaches. *eBeaches* facilitates fast, easy, and secure transmittal of beach water quality information and improves public access to information about beach conditions and health risks associated with swimming in polluted water.

Why did we develop *eBeaches*?

The goal of *eBeaches* is to provide the most recent beach information to the public. We can quickly receive and display accurate information about beach water quality and swimming advisories as soon as those state and local agencies send us the data. We developed *eBeaches* to fulfill a BEACH Act requirement. *eBeaches* is also part of an Agency initiative to move toward electronic reporting. *eBeaches* replaced a paper survey that we used since 1997 to make it easier and faster for state and local agencies to send beach data to us over the Internet. Visitors can visit BEACON (BEach Advisories and Closings Online Notification system) to see if the water at a specific beach is monitored, who does the monitoring, what pollutants are monitored, and whether advisories or closures have been issued in the past.

How does *eBeaches* reduce reporting burdens and costs to state and local governments?

Through *eBeaches* we can receive data electronically through the (CDX) Central Data Exchange, the central receiving point for environmental data. *eBeaches* saves time and money by enabling electronic transactions and eliminating tedious paper forms and outdated methods of data entry. *eBeaches* is a secure electronic environment for faster, and easier click-and-send reporting.

How are data received and stored through the *eBeaches* process?

Beach water quality, swimming advisory, and monitoring program data are transmitted to us through CDX. CDX provides built-in data quality checks, web forms, standard file formats, and a common, user-friendly approach to reporting environmental data. EPA partners submit water quality and beach advisory data through CDX, and it is stored in a variety of EPA databases. Beach water quality data stored in our STORET (STORage and RETrieval) database, a repository for water quality, biological, and physical data. Local beach program and advisory data are stored in our PRAWN (PRogram tracking, beach Advisory, Water quality standard, and Nutrient) database. Beach location data are stored in our Watershed Assessment, Tracking, and Environmental Results System (WATERS). The public can access this data through BEACON.

eBeaches also allows state and local agencies to create and display maps of the beaches they are monitoring. Using the National Hydrographic Database Reach Indexing (NHD-RIT), states or local agencies can make available beach maps

that are geographically linked to water quality and swimming advisory data and information about surrounding watersheds.

Related Links

- [eBEACHES Data Flow Diagram \(PDF\)](#) (3 pp, 19K)
- [CDX](#)
- [STORET](#)
- [BEACON](#)
- [NHD-RIT](#)
- [WATERS](#)

For More Information

Contact Bill Kramer (202-566-0385 or kramer.bill@epa.gov).

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