

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA's BEACH Report:

Virginia 2006 Swimming Season

June 2007

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 Commonwealth of Virginia for the 2006 swimming season.

Bacteria levels in beach water are monitored at 47 public beaches in Virginia on the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Environmental health personnel from local health departments regularly sample water for Enterococcus bacteria at public beaches between May and September.

Figure 1. Virginia coastal counties with 2006 monitored beach data.



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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ACCOMACK	2	2	0
GLOUCESTER	1	1	0
HAMPTON	2	2	0
KING GEORGE	1	1	0
MATHEWS	1	1	0
NEWPORT NEWS	4	4	0
NORFOLK	9	9	0
NORTHAMPTON	2	2	0
VIRGINIA BEACH	24	24	0
YORK	1	1	0
TOTALS	47	47	0

2006 Summary Results

How many beaches had notification actions?

When monitoring of water at beaches shows that levels of Enterococcus bacteria exceed the state water quality standard, a swimming advisory sign is posted at the affected beach, in addition to notifying local news agencies through a press release and posting the swimming advisory information on the Virginia Department of Health Web site. Of the 47 coastal beaches that were monitored in 2006, 4, or 9 percent, had at least one advisory during the 2006 season (Figure 2).

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

A total of 8 beach notification actions were reported in the 2006 swimming season. Actions were of relatively short duration, however. Figure 3 presents breakdowns of action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Virginia's 2006 swimming season, EPA determined there were a total of 7,038 beach days associated with the 47 monitored beaches. Actions were reported on 43 of those days or about 0.6 percent of the time (Figure 4).

How do 2006 results compare to previous years?

Beginning in 2003, states are required to submit data to EPA under the BEACH Act for beaches which are in coastal and Great Lakes waters. Table 2 compares 2006 data with data reported in previous years.

For More Information

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

For information about beaches in Virginia:
www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DZEE/BeachMonitoring/

Figure 2: Monitored beaches with and without notification actions.

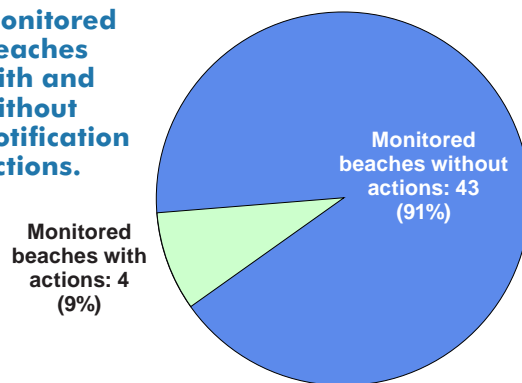


Figure 3: Beach notification actions by duration.

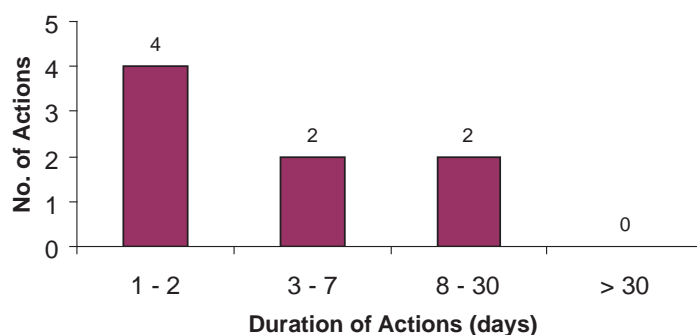


Figure 4: Beach days with and without notification actions.

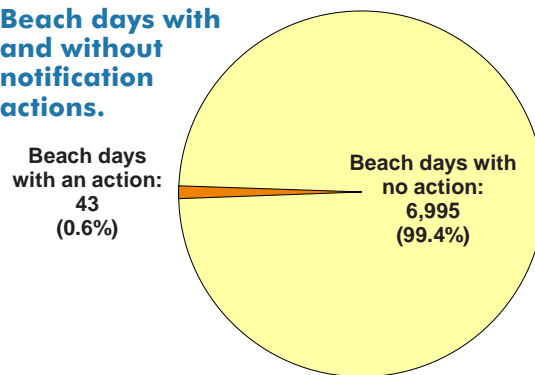


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2004-2006.

	2004	2005	2006
Number of monitored beaches	47	49	47
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	11	8	4
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	23%	16%	9%