



EPA's BEACH Report:

Rhode Island 2007 Swimming Season

July 2008

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 State of Rhode Island for the 2007 swimming season.

From May to September 2007, the Rhode Island Beach Program collected approximately 2,800 samples from all its monitored saltwater beaches. All samples were analyzed for Enterococci, as required in the federal BEACH Act. The 2007 bathing season saw a decrease in beach closures and closure days from the 2006 season. Closure days are greatly influenced by rainfall and by monitoring strategies and schedules.

The intensity and total volume of rainfall was lower during the summer of 2007 (June 1 to August 31) than the summer of 2006. Total rainfall decreased from 14.65 inches in 2006 to only 8.28 inches in 2007.

Significant rainfall instances (<0.50" in a 24-hour period from June 1-August 31 at TF Green) were similar, with 5 instances in 2006 and 6 instances in 2007. As the Rhode Island Beach Program refines its sampling strategies, monitoring efforts are focused in areas of greatest concern and sample collection is targeted for times when high bacteria counts are most likely to be present.

Figure 1. Rhode Island coastal counties.



Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2007.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BRISTOL	20	4	16
KENT	16	4	12
NEWPORT	87	17	70
PROVIDENCE	8	0	8
WASHINGTON	102	43	59
TOTALS	233	68	165

2007 Summary Results

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

Rhode Island's approach is to issue a beach advisory when water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 15 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2007 swimming season. About 76 percent of Rhode Island's 33 notification actions lasted two days or less. Figure 2 presents a full breakdown of notification action durations.

What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

For Rhode Island's 2007 swimming season, actions were reported about 1 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2007 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2007 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources impact monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Rhode Island's monitored beaches potentially impacted by various pollution sources. In 2007, 93 percent of the beaches were listed as having unidentified sources of pollution.

For More Information

For general information about beaches:

www.epa.gov/beaches/

For information about beaches in Rhode Island:

www.ribeaches.org/index.cfm

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

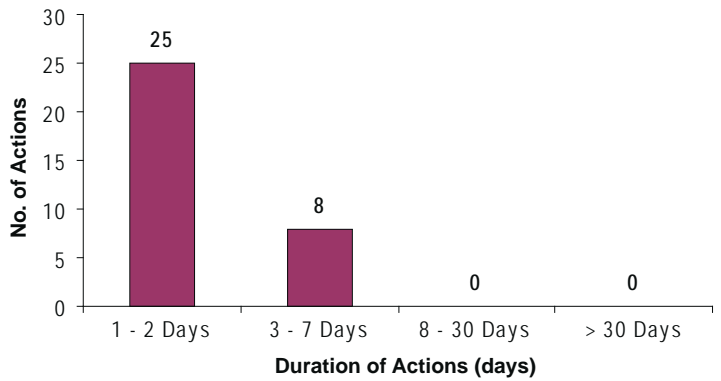


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

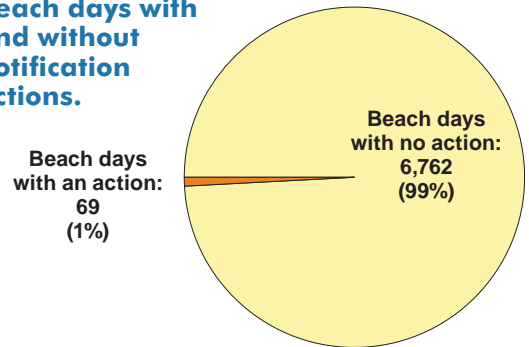


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2005–2007.

	2005	2006	2007
Number of monitored beaches	70	74	68
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	14	17	15
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	20%	23%	22%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	2%	6%	1%

Figure 4: Percent of monitored beaches potentially impacted by pollution sources (68 beaches).

