

EPA's BEACH Report: Rhode Island 2012 Swimming Season

September 2013

EPA 820-F-13-015

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 Rhode Island for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Rhode Island monitored 123 coastal beaches in five 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, Rhode Island officials close the beach to public swimming until further monitoring finds that water quality complies with applicable standards.

Figure 1. Rhode Island coastal counties



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

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BRISTOL	4	4	0
KENT	10	10	0
NEWPORT	23	23	0
PROVIDENCE	28	28	0
WASHINGTON	58	58	0
TOTALS	123	123	0

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

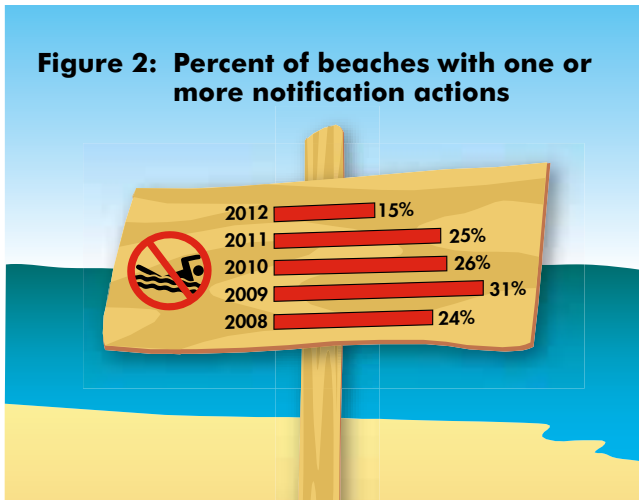
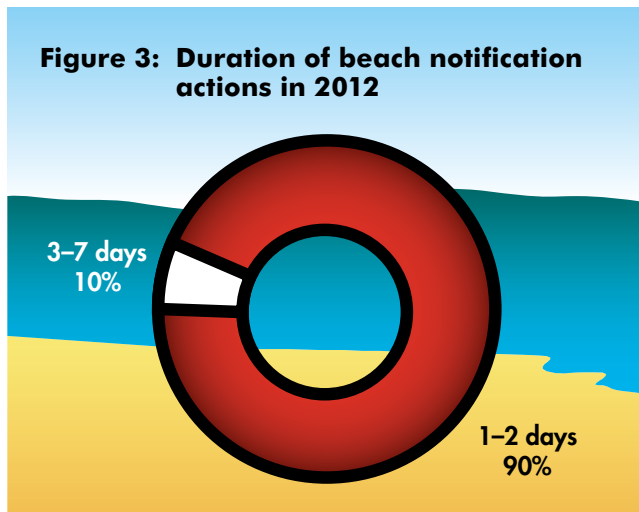


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 123 coastal beaches that Rhode Island monitored, 18 (15 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2).

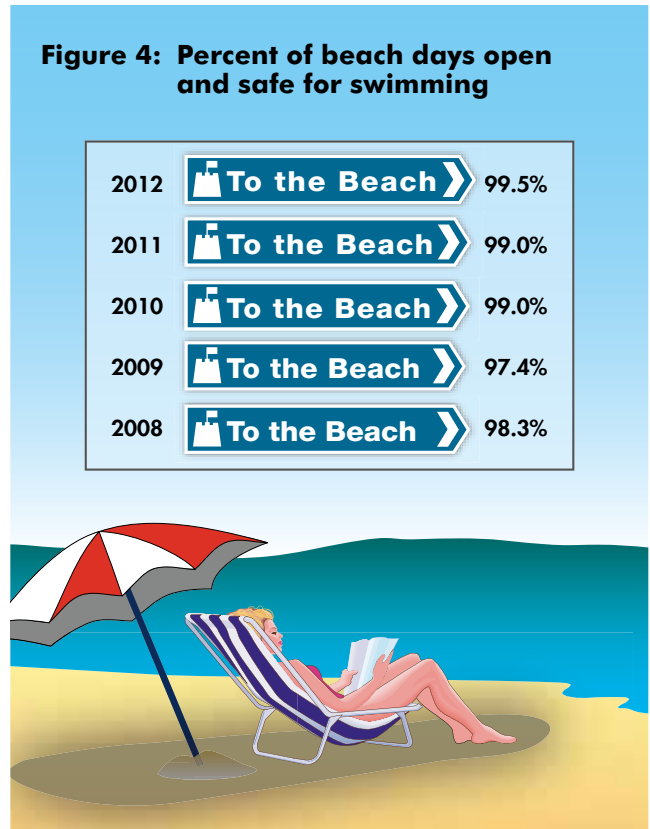
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

Rhode Island issued 29 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Rhode Island lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (90 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within one or two days (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

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



beach days are determined by multiplying the length of the beach season by the number of beaches in the state. For 2012 EPA calculated that 9,391 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 123 monitored Rhode Island beaches. Rhode Island reported notification actions on 49 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming over 99 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in Rhode Island (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Rhode Island beach program contact:

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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/>.