

# EPA's BEACH Report: Hawaii 2012 Swimming Season

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## 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 Hawaii for the 2012 swimming season.

## 2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Hawaii monitored 147 coastal beaches in four 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, Hawaii officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming. In some cases, advisories are issued preemptively (i.e., without having actual bacteria monitoring results) due to storms or other conditions that might affect swimmer safety.

### How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 147 coastal beaches that Hawaii monitored, 50 (34 percent) had actions due to rainfall (Figure 2). All were located in Honolulu and Kauai. Unlike in 2009 and 2011, no state-wide advisories were issued.

Figure 1. Hawaii coastal counties

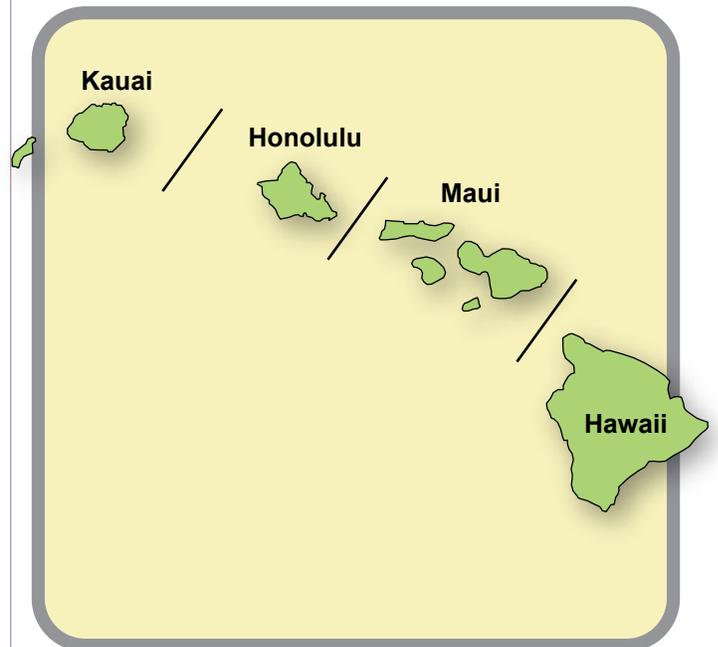
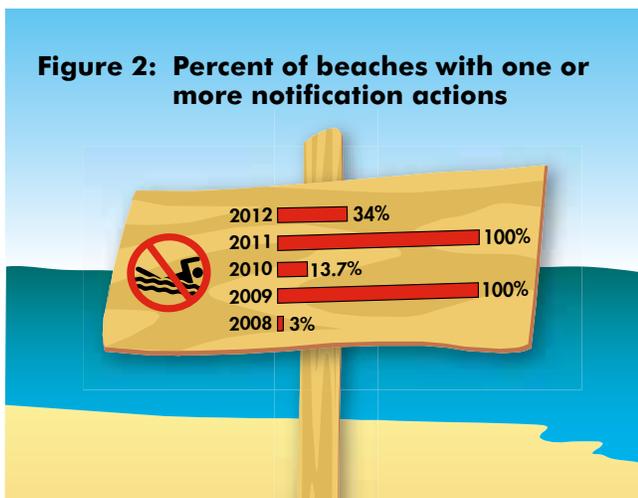


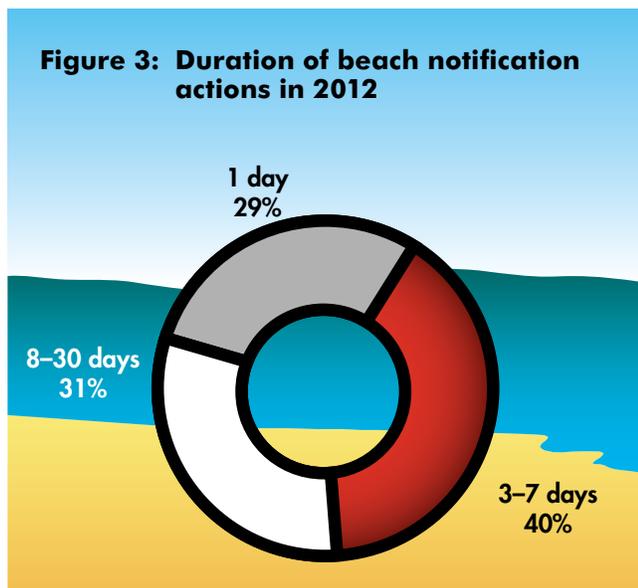
Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
HAWAII	84	47	37
HONOLULU	137	29	108
KAUAI	63	21	42
MAUI	127	50	77
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>264</b>

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



**Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012**



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

Hawaii issued 272 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. With the exception of one sewage contamination advisory, all the actions were rain advisories associated with specific storms: March 5–March 11, 2012 for the Honolulu beaches; and February 27–March 23 and July 21 for the Kauai beaches. Typically Hawaii lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (69 percent) water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within a week or less (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

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



to better track trends over time. Total available 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 53,655 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 147 monitored Hawaii beaches. Hawaii reported notification actions on 729 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 99 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at beaches in Hawaii (Figure 4).

**For More Information**

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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/beam2/>.