

EPA's BEACH Report: Texas 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 Texas for the 2012 swimming season.

2012 Swimming Season Monitoring and Notification Actions

Texas reports 169 beaches located in 14 counties. Texas monitored 62 of these beaches in nine 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, Texas officials issue a beach advisory, warning people of possible risks of swimming.

Figure 1. Texas coastal counties

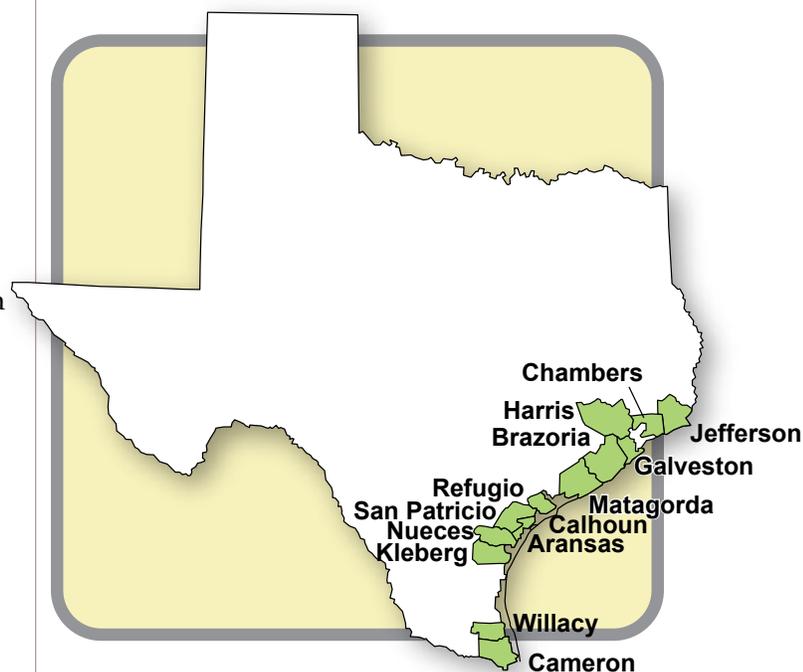


Table 1. Number of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2012

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
ARANSAS	9	1	8
BRAZORIA	10	4	6
CALHOUN	18	0	18
CAMERON	12	9	3
CHAMBERS	2	0	2
GALVESTON	36	23	13
HARRIS	8	1	7
JEFFERSON	2	2	0
KLEBERG	7	0	7
MATAGORDA	12	3	9
NUECES	43	18	25
REFUGIO	1	0	1
SAN PATRICIO	6	1	5
WILLACY	3	0	3
TOTALS	169	62	107

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

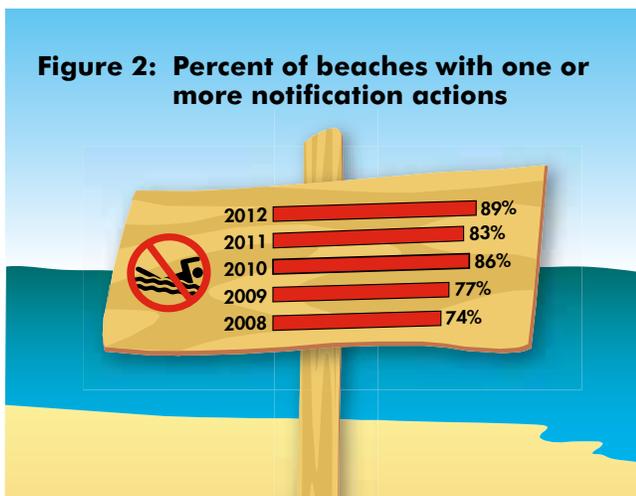
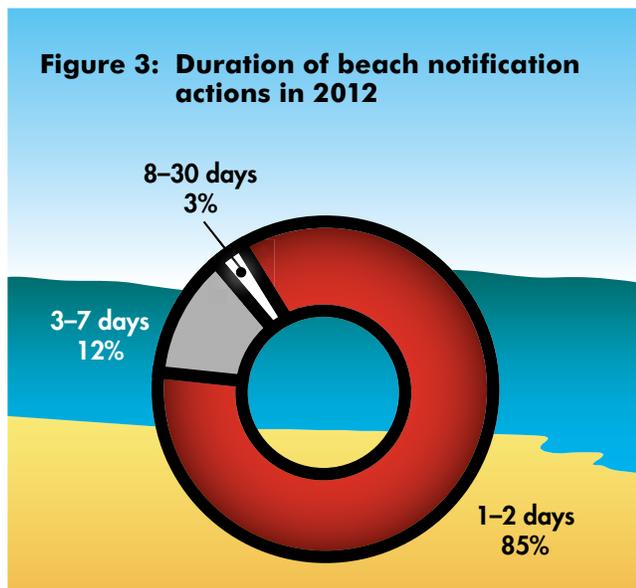


Figure 3: Duration of beach notification actions in 2012



How many beaches had notification actions?

In 2012, of the 62 coastal beaches that Texas monitored, 55 (89 percent) had at least one notification action (Figure 2).

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

Texas issued 235 notification actions during the 2012 swimming season. Typically Texas lifts an action when follow-up monitoring indicates that water quality complies with applicable standards. For the majority of actions (85 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

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 22,630 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of the 62 monitored Texas beaches. Texas reported notification actions on 442 days, meaning that beaches were open and safe for swimming about 98 percent of the time. This continues the trend of consistently high percentages of open beach days at swimming beaches in Texas (Figure 4).

For More Information

For information about the Texas 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/beamcon2/>.