



EPA's BEACH Report: Massachusetts 2009 Swimming Season

May 2010

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 Massachusetts for the 2009 swimming season.

Figure 1. Massachusetts coastal counties.

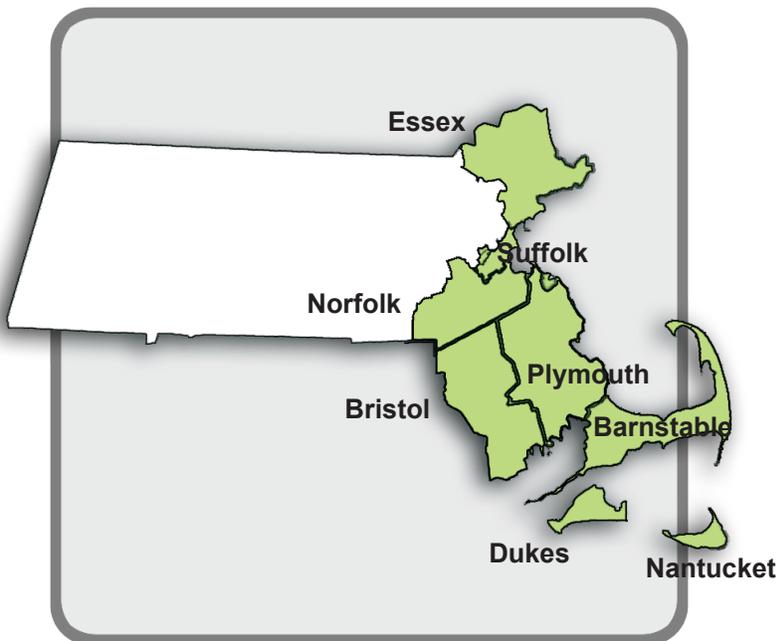


Table 1. Breakdown of monitored and unmonitored coastal beaches by county for 2009.

County	Total Beaches	Monitored	Not Monitored
BARNSTABLE	274	274	0
BRISTOL	42	42	0
DUKES	45	45	0
ESSEX	88	88	0
NANTUCKET	15	15	0
NORFOLK	25	25	0
PLYMOUTH	90	90	0
SUFFOLK	24	24	0
TOTALS	603	603	0

2009 Summary Results

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

When water quality standards are exceeded at a particular beach, Massachusetts' approach is to issue a beach advisory that warns people to avoid contact with the water. A total of 240 monitored beaches had at least one advisory issued during the 2009 swimming season. About 73 percent of Massachusetts' 585 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 Massachusetts' 2009 swimming season, actions were reported about 3 percent of the time (Figure 3).

How do 2009 results compare to previous years?

Table 2 compares 2009 notification action data with monitored beach data from previous years.

What pollution sources possibly affect investigated monitored beaches?

Figure 4 displays the percentage of Massachusetts' investigated monitored beaches possibly impacted by various pollution sources. In 2009, 93 percent of beaches investigated for possible pollution sources listed storm-related runoff as a possible pollution source.

For More Information

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

For information about beaches in Massachusetts:
www.mass.gov/dph/topics/beaches.htm
 or (617) 624-5757

Figure 2: Beach notification actions by duration.

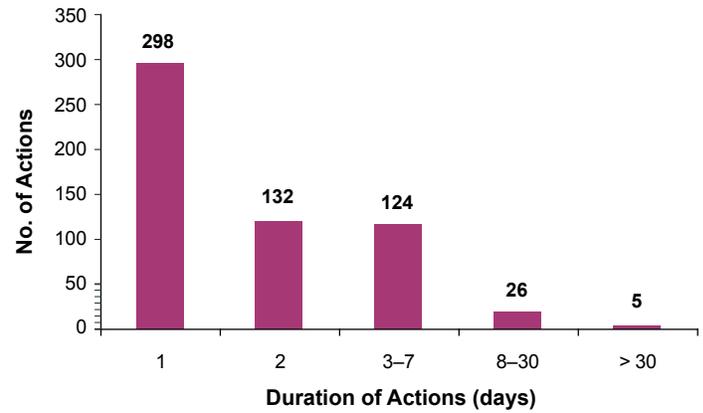


Figure 3: Beach days with and without notification actions.

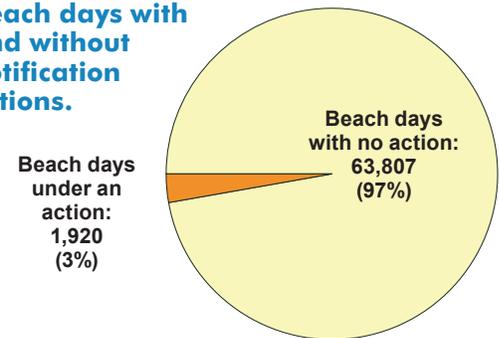


Table 2. Beach notification actions, 2007-2009.

	2007	2008	2009
Number of monitored beaches	587	604	603
Number of beaches affected by notification actions	131	186	240
Percentage of beaches affected by notification actions	22%	31%	40%
Percentage of beach days affected by notification actions	1%	2%	3%

Figure 4: Percent of investigated monitored beaches affected by possible pollution sources (58 beaches).

