



AUGUST 2004

Swimming in Trash?

A Look into Cleanliness at NYC Beaches



A STAFF REPORT TO

THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Hon. Gifford Miller • Speaker



THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS
Hon. Eric Gioia • Chair

THE COMMITTEE ON PARKS
AND RECREATION
Hon. Helen Foster • Chair

**THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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This report can be found on the Council's website at

www.nyccouncil.info

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of New York City's 578 miles of coastline, only a fraction, 14 miles, is reserved for the City's seven public beaches. The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation operates these beaches, found in every borough but Manhattan.ⁱ The beaches are open to the public for just over three months every year, but in that time receive more visitors than the entire population of New York City. The Department of Parks and Recreation's estimates indicate that approximately 15 million patrons visited the seven public beaches during the summer of 2002.ⁱⁱ Yet a New York City Council investigation finds that New York City beachgoers who expect sun, surf and sand might also find condoms, hypodermic needles, food wrappers, and other garbage littering both shore and sea.

While two beaches stood out as exceptionally clean, investigators found disturbing amounts of floatable debris and packaging waste from consumable goods like cigarettes, fast food products, and beverages at the other five. For example, investigators spotted "a tampon applicator only a few feet from where children played in the sand" at Coney Island in Brooklyn, and "a condom along the edge of the sand and water, where many kids were swimming" at Midland Beach in Staten Island.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (hereinafter DPR) "Don't Go Postal—Go Coastal!" *The Daily Plant*, July 13, 2004, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_newsroom/daily_plants/daily_plant_main.php?id=19093.

ⁱⁱ DPR, "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_faqs/park_faqs.html#e8 (accessed June 30, 2004). The City's seven beaches are Orchard Beach in the Bronx, Brighton Beach, Coney Island and Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, Rockaway Beach in Queens, and Midland Beach, South Beach and Wolfe's Pond Park in Staten Island.

ⁱⁱⁱ Where descriptions are in quotes, they are culled directly from investigators' narratives of their field visits.

Key Findings

- Waste items such as tires, condoms, syringes, wigs, dead rodents and used sanitary napkins were found—often within mere feet of children playing on the shore.
- The most prevalent types of beach waste were food wrappers and plastic bottles, found littering every City beach (100%).
- South Beach and Midland Beach, both in Staten Island, were the dirtiest beaches surveyed, while Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, and Wolfe's Pond Park in Staten Island were the cleanest, according to investigators' reports.

The table below summarizes these findings:^{iv}

Type of Debris	# of Beaches (out of 7)	Percentage
Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	7	100%
Food Wrappers/Containers	7	100%
Straws/Stirrers	6	86%
Clothing/Shoes	6	86%
Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	5	71%
Bags	5	71%
Beverage Bottles (Glass)	5	71%
Beverage Cans	5	71%
Tobacco Packaging/Wrappers	5	71%
Tampons/Tampon Applicators	4	57%
Cups/Plates/Forks/Knives/Spoons	4	57%
Oil/Lube Bottles	2	29%
Syringes	2	29%
Six-Pack Holders	1	14%
Tires	1	14%
Condoms	1	14%
Diapers	0	0%
Additional Items: dead rodent (South Beach), a wig (Coney Island), a potted plant container (Midland Beach), a used sanitary napkin (Coney Island)		

^{iv} For tabulated findings by beach, see Appendix C.

New York City Council investigators visited every City beach twice to assess whether shorelines were clean and sanitary. Over three days during July 2004, investigators walked along each beachfront, examining designated swimming and bathing areas for floatable debris and garbage wash-ups.^v Using a checklist adapted from the list used by the American Littoral Society to report findings from International Coastal Cleanups, investigators documented and took photographs of the types of litter and debris they found.^{vi} Investigators evaluated both the concentration of shoreline and floatable debris and the contents of that debris. They drafted written descriptions of the conditions they had witnessed at each beach they visited.^{vii}

New York City has substantial waterfront property but the public is allowed access only to a small portion for recreational purposes. In an urban setting with limited outdoor recreational space, beaches are an oasis and escape from the City. Therefore, they should be treated like the valuable resources they are. Two beaches under Parks Department jurisdiction appear to be in very clean condition; the Department should examine its best practices there and apply them to the beaches that did not fare as well.

^v It should be noted that investigators did not count, weigh or otherwise measure the debris they found; this methodology enables a qualitative analysis only and was used to get a snapshot of the condition of City-operated public beaches during the mid-summer.

^{vi} The American Littoral Society, Northeast Chapter, “Results of the 2003 New York State Beach Cleanup,” <http://www.alsnyc.org> (accessed August 3, 2004). See Appendix B for the list Council investigators used.

^{vii} Excerpts from these narratives are reported in the Findings section of this report.

Recommendations

- **Pass the Clean Beach Act of 2004.** This legislation would require:
 - Posting online of clean beach standards and results for every beach, including disclosure of whether beaches meet federal water quality standards.
 - Making ParkStatPLUS ratings available online for every beach and park.
 - Posting date and results of last inspection at each beach.
- **Increase clean-up and routine trash pick-ups at each beach.**
- **Require the Department of Parks and Recreation to aggressively market the Adopt-a-Beach Program** to citizens, corporations and community groups via the mechanisms provided in Local Law 55 of 2003. This legislation would facilitate public-private initiatives to support all City beaches.
- **Support this year's International Beach Cleanup Day.**

BACKGROUND

Of New York City's 578 miles of coastline, 14 miles make up the City's public beaches. The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation operates these beaches, found in every borough but Manhattan.¹ Although the beaches are open to the public for just over three months every year (from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend), in that time they receive more visitors than the entire population of New York City. The Department of Parks and Recreation's estimates indicate that approximately 15 million patrons visited the seven public beaches during the summer of 2002.²

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) Bureau of Public Health Engineering certifies the safety of New York City's seven public and 12 private beaches. It classifies whether beaches are safe for bathing based on a number of criteria, including bacteria levels in the water, sanitary and safety surveys, frequency of use and proximity to potential pollution sources.³

One of the criteria DOHMH uses to determine whether beaches are safe for bathing is the presence of floatable debris in the water. As the name suggests, floatable debris consist primarily of manmade waste products that float on or below the water surface. Common causes of floatable

¹ New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (hereinafter DPR) "Don't Go Postal—Go Coastal!" *The Daily Plant*, July 13, 2004, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_newsroom/daily_plants/daily_plant_main.php?id=19093.

² DPR, "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_faqs/park_faqs.html#e8 (accessed June 30, 2004). The City's seven beaches are Orchard Beach in the Bronx, Brighton Beach, Coney Island and Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, Rockaway Beach in Queens, and Midland Beach, South Beach and Wolfe's Pond Park in Staten Island.

³ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (hereinafter DOHMH). "Beach Quality and Safety: Beach Classifications," http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/beach/beach_adv.html (accessed June 30, 2004). See Appendix A for DOHMH's beach classifications and their descriptions.

debris include waste materials from combined sewer overflows, storm water discharges, and debris left on beaches by bathers.⁴

While floatable debris is not considered as great a health concern as other contaminants—like toxic materials or high bacteria levels—it can affect water quality, and public perception of beach water quality.⁵ City beaches may be classified as "Temporarily Restricted for Swimming and Bathing" when a sanitary and safety survey or an investigation reveals potentially hazardous amounts of floatable debris or other contamination on the beach.⁶

In the summer of 1988, City officials were forced to close beaches for days, weeks, or in some cases over a month because of large amounts of sewage, floatable debris and medical waste—including blood vials that tested positive for HIV and hepatitis—washing up on shore.⁷ This prompted the creation of an interagency “Floatable Action Plan” the next year to prevent future beach closures due to massive garbage slicks.⁸ The plan, which brings together the resources of various federal, New Jersey, New York State and New York City agencies, involves routine helicopter surveillance of the New York/New Jersey harbor complex to spot floatable debris, and routine and emergency capture and cleanup of garbage slicks using boats equipped with special netting.⁹ The Floatable

⁴ DOHMH, “Beach Quality and Safety,” http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doh/html/beach/beach_education1.html (last updated May 28, 2004).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ DOHMH, “Beach Classifications” (see n. 3).

⁷ David W. Chen, “Beach Closed in Rockaways as More Debris Washes Ashore,” *The New York Times*, July 29, 1998, p. B1 (final edition). It was later determined that the main cause of the garbage slicks was the Fresh Kills landfill in Staten Island.

⁸ PR Newswire, “Million-Dollar Floatables Action Plan Outlined for summer of ‘89,” March 7, 1989.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Action Plan was quickly hailed as a success, with only six beach closures due to debris wash-ups between 1989 and 1994.¹⁰

The Parks Department has seen decreases to its baseline budget for maintenance and operations over the past several fiscal years—over 16%, or more than \$24.8 million over the last three fiscal years alone.¹¹ For Fiscal Year 2004 (FY '04), Mayor Bloomberg proposed cutting over \$12.5 million from the Parks Department's budget for seasonal workers, an amount City Council restored.¹² This restoration of funding to maintain seasonal workers, many of whom perform maintenance duties, was more than twice what the Council had to restore for seasonal workers in the previous two fiscal years—\$5,984,762 for FY '03 and \$2,983,000 for FY '02—and exceeds the City Council's combined restorations to the entire Parks Department budget over those years.¹³

The Parks Department employs an accountability program that rates Parks Department properties by a number of performance indicators and condition ratings. The program, known as ParkStatPLUS, feeds into Department's Parks Inspection Program (PIP) by allowing it to allocate resources in a manner responsive to public feedback.¹⁴ Since 1997, the program has helped improve the City's overall PIP condition rating from 73% to 88% acceptable, according to the Parks Department.¹⁵

¹⁰ PR Newswire, "No Beach Closures for Two Years Running, Thanks to an Inter-agency Plan," June 14, 1995.

¹¹ New York City Council Finance Division.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* In FY '03, the Council restored \$7,514,762 and in FY '02, \$4,686,000 to the Parks Department budget.

¹⁴ "ParkStatPLUS Program Overview." Available online at www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about under "accountability". Last accessed 6 Aug. 2004.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Members of the public can rate parks and submit comments about it by filling out a survey online.¹⁶ Visitors to the site choose a borough, and then select the park. All beaches but Orchard Beach are listed. The webform does allow a respondent to choose “Park not listed.”

Although the public has the ability to rate parks individually, the website does not allow the public to view the overall ratings for specific parks. Instead, all results for both “Overall Conditions” and “Cleanliness Ratings” are listed on a map by neighborhood and by borough.¹⁷ Year-to-year improvement ratings are listed citywide.¹⁸

Each year, the Ocean Conservancy sponsors an International Coastal Cleanup, a one-day volunteer effort to clean our shorelines. The American Littoral Society coordinates this effort in New York State. In New York City last year, 2,698 volunteers collected 151,599 pounds of debris over 54 miles of coastline—in a single day.¹⁹

May 27, 2004 marked the beginning of New York City’s current beach season.²⁰ At that time, each of the seven beaches had met DOHMH’s standards for water quality, as well as sanitary and safety conditions. This investigation was designed to provide a snapshot of beach cleanliness for the summer of 2004.

¹⁶ Survey is available at http://www.nycgovparks.org/email_forms/operations_survey/ops_survey3.html. Last accessed 6 Aug. 2004.

¹⁷ Ratings available online at: http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/cap/pdf/cw_oc_cy03.pdf. Last accessed 6 Aug. 2004.

¹⁸ Ratings at: http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/cap/pip_yearly.html. Last accessed 6 Aug. 2004.

¹⁹ The American Littoral Society, Northeast Chapter (hereinafter ALS), “Results of the 2003 New York State Beach Cleanup,” <http://www.alsnyc.org> (accessed August 3, 2004). Last year’s International Coastal Cleanup took place on September 20, 2003, after the close of New York City’s beach season, when beaches are cleaned daily.

²⁰ DPR, “Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Announces Start of the New York City Beach Season” (press release), May 27, 2004, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_newsroom/media_advisories/press_releases.php?id=18990.

METHODOLOGY

The New York City Council Investigation Division visited and assessed all seven of the City's beaches to determine whether shorelines appeared to be clean and sanitary.

Over the course of three days during the month of July 2004, teams of Council investigators visited each of the City's beaches twice. On the date of each visit, investigators first called 311 to ascertain that each beach was in fact open.

Investigators walked along each beachfront, examining designated swimming and bathing areas for floatable debris and garbage wash-ups. Using a checklist adapted from the list used by the American Littoral Society to report findings from International Coastal Cleanups, investigators documented and took photographs of the types of litter and debris they found.²¹ Investigators did not count, weigh or otherwise measure the debris they found; this methodology was designed only to provide a snapshot of sanitary conditions on City-operated public beaches during the mid-summer days when investigators visited.

This investigation employs a qualitative analysis. To that end, investigators evaluated both the concentration of shoreline and floatable debris and the contents of that debris. They drafted written descriptions of the conditions they had witnessed at each beach they visited. Excerpts from these narratives are reported in the Findings section of this report.

²¹ ALS, "2003 NYS Beach Cleanup" (see n. 11). See Appendix B for the list Council investigators used.

FINDINGS

At five of New York City's seven public beaches, investigators found disturbing amounts of floatable debris and packaging waste from consumable goods like cigarettes, fast food products, and beverages. Investigators found Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn, and Wolfe's Pond Park in Staten Island to be appreciably cleaner than all other beaches surveyed. At the opposite end of the spectrum, South Beach and Midland Beach, both in Staten Island, were appreciably dirtier than any of the other beaches.

The table below summarizes these findings:²²

Type of Debris	# of Beaches (out of 7)	Percentage
Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less	7	100%
Food Wrappers/Containers	7	100%
Straws/Stirrers	6	86%
Clothing/Shoes	6	86%
Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters	5	71%
Bags	5	71%
Beverage Bottles (Glass)	5	71%
Beverage Cans	5	71%
Tobacco Packaging/Wrappers	5	71%
Tampons/Tampon Applicators	4	57%
Cups/Plates/Forks/Knives/Spoons	4	57%
Oil/Lube Bottles	2	29%
Syringes	2	29%
Six-Pack Holders	1	14%
Tires	1	14%
Condoms	1	14%
Diapers	0	0%
Additional Items: dead rodent (South Beach), a wig (Coney Island), a potted plant container (Midland Beach), a used sanitary napkin (Coney Island)		

²² For tabulated findings by beach, see Appendix D.

Findings by Beach

Coney Island

Coney Island and its 3.5 miles of shoreline and boardwalk in south Brooklyn is New York City's most visited beach. In summer of 2002, approximately 9.5 million people visited Coney Island.²³

- **First Visit:** Investigators found that trash pails on the beach were already full, and in some cases overfilled. Wind had knocked several over, leaving a trail of debris and shards of broken glass bottles. Yet “bottles and broken glass were not limited to areas surrounding rubbish receptacles.”²⁴ Despite signs banning alcoholic beverages “visitors left behind a beach strewn with half-buried bottles along the waterfront.” In some areas, it looked “as though trash had been accumulating for days.” In a ravine “debris ranging from empty bottles, to bags, to papers and plastic plates had accumulated.” Motor oil containers also littered the boardwalk. Closer to the water, “the sand was cleaner, for the most part, but not debris-free.” Investigators came across a used sanitary napkin a few yards from the water line. Investigators also saw a “long-hair wig near the water with unwilling swimmers splashing nearby.” Investigators also “spotted a tampon applicator only a few feet from where children played in the sand.”
- **Second Visit:** Investigators observed “many areas littered with debris.” The debris consisted of broken glass, food packaging, beverage containers and clothing. Investigators also saw “three rows

²³ DPR, “Frequently Asked Questions” (see n. 2). Attendance numbers for all beaches are from this source.

²⁴ Where descriptions are in quotes, they are culled directly from investigators’ write-ups.

of garbage cans that lined both the beach and the sidewalk” that were all empty. Investigators were unable to walk without shoes at the beach because of high levels of litter.

Manhattan Beach

This beach is located on a peninsula on the southeastern end of Brooklyn, bounded by Sheepshead Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. It is a quarter-mile long, with a small boardwalk. In Summer 2002, over 650,000 people visited Manhattan Beach.

- **First Visit:** Investigators found this beach very clean; aside from a few cigarettes and bottles, investigators said this beach was “almost spotless.”
- **Second Visit:** The second visit yielded similar results. Investigators thought that this beach was “very well maintained and clean.”

Midland Beach

Midland Beach lies along the eastern coast of Staten Island, in the area known locally as “the South Shore.” In Summer 2002, 56,170 people visited Midland Beach. The Midland Beach and South Beach shorelines are adjacent; many of the comments about the general level of cleanliness at Midland Beach apply to South Beach as well.

- **First Visit:** Investigators observed that it was “very dirty and unsafe.” They also observed food wrappers including “many potato chip bags and plastic bags.” Investigators also found a large container for potting plants.

- **Second Visit:** Investigators surveyed the beach and observed “cigarette butts littering the sand in the designated swimming area” as well as “a condom along the edge of the sand and water, where many kids were swimming.” They also observed “a hypodermic needle and food wrappers and containers.”

Orchard Beach

Orchard Beach’s 1.1-mile stretch of shoreline is located on the Long Island Sound in the Pelham Bay Park area of the Bronx. In Summer 2002, nearly 900,000 people visited Orchard Beach.

- **First Visit:** Investigators were “horrified” at the levels of floatable debris and trash. Even as children waded and adults swam in the water, there were “numerous soda bottles, cigarette butts, and fried chicken containers [from KFC], as well as a child’s underwear, and even a large dead fish.”
- **Second Visit:** The beachfront was found to be much cleaner. Investigators mostly noticed cigarette butts and discarded batteries, but overall, it was “a marked improvement over the first visit.”

Rockaway Beach

At 6.5 miles long, Rockaway Beach is the longest stretch of City-owned beach. With 4.4 million visitors in Summer 2002, it is second only to Coney Island in the total number of visitors it receives each year.

- **First Visit:** The more residential, less populated end of the beach was absent of large crowds and the “sand was clean” with “no garbage.” All of the trash cans were “empty and well kept.” The beach was “clean enough that both investigators roamed it without

shoes on.” Further down towards the main entrance, however, the beach was more heavily populated and less clean. The garbage there included “newspapers, beer bottles, cardboard, six-pack holders, food wrappers and cigarette butts.” This part of the beach was “riddled with debris.”

- **Second Visit:** The trash cans, without exception, were empty, what little debris existed “included mainly small plastic bottle tops and shreds of paper no larger than a gum wrapper, probably too small for a machine to collect.” Although the countless bottles, motor oil containers, papers and other trash may have washed up on shore, rather than get carted in by beachgoers, it had settled along the ridge in the sand created by the change in tide. Investigators also saw “bags, foil containers and in one case, a sun-bleached doll in a tattered dress.” Between Beach 66th and Beach 20th Streets, investigators found “several tampon applicators, bits of broken glass, and sacks of clothing.” There were shoes and motor oil containers also. Under the boardwalk, there were “some motor oil bottles, plastic bags, a few shoes and other miscellaneous bulky waste.”

South Beach

South Beach is located on the south shore of Staten Island and offers views of the Atlantic Ocean, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and the Lower New York Bay. Its shoreline is adjacent to Midland Beach. In Summer 2002, more than 47,500 people visited South Beach.

- **First Visit:** Investigators felt this was “by far the worst beach surveyed.” They reported “litter floating all along the beach making it inaccessible for swimming” and witnessed a “child [who] came up from the water with cigarette butts and a potato chip bag stuck to

him.” Also visible on the beach was a “dead rat … a few feet in front of parents who did not even know it was a rat.” Investigators also saw several large white chunks of an unidentified substance floating in the water.

- **Second Visit:** Investigators acknowledged that the beach was “exceptionally dirty” and that “litter cloaked the water.” The beach was so dirty that “there was not a foot radius where the surface of the water and sand had no trash or debris covering the surface.” Investigators also observed “a young woman run out of the water and scream ‘the water is gooey!’” A hypodermic needle, black garbage bags and a dead rodent with flies buzzing around it were also spotted.

Wolfe’s Pond Park

Wolfe’s Pond Beach and Park, located on the south shore of Staten Island, is a 170-acre wooded parkland, with 20 acres set aside for swimming. Wolfe’s Pond received nearly 64,000 visitors in Summer 2002.

- **First Visit:** Investigators observed that this small beach was “quite clean” other than “large amounts of seaweed and rocks.” There were “no large items of garbage on the sand or in the water.”
- **Second Visit:** Investigators found only “a few straws, food wrappers and a shoe.” The beach was clean, although “kelp was found all along the beach”. According to one investigator the beach was the “cleanest surveyed.”

CONCLUSION

With millions of people visiting our City's public beaches it is understandable that large quantities of trash are left behind. But with millions of people taking refuge from the heat at our shores, the Department of Parks and Recreation needs to do a more thorough job of cleaning up the refuse.

Like many City agencies, the Department of Parks and Recreation has suffered cuts to its budget over the past several years, and the City Council has restored significant funding to keep maintenance efforts from declining to unacceptable levels.

This investigation finds that two beaches stood out as exceptionally clean; the Parks Department would do well to examine its best practices there to assess how to improve cleanliness at the other five. Although we have not returned to the unsanitary conditions of the summer of 1998, it is clear that there is more to do to ensure that beaches classified as open for swimming and bathing are in fact sanitary and safe. Our City's beaches are a valuable resource that needs to be properly maintained and protected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Pass the Clean Beach Act of 2004.**

This legislation would require:

- Posting of clean beach standards and results for every beach online, including disclosure of whether beaches meet federal water quality standards.
- Making ParkStatPLUS ratings available online for every beach and park.
- Posting date and results of last inspection at each beach.

- **Increase clean-up and routine trash pick-ups at each beach.**

- **Require the Department of Parks and Recreation to aggressively market the Adopt-a-Beach Program** to citizens, corporations and community groups via the mechanisms provided in Local Law 55 of 2003. This legislation would facilitate public-private initiatives to support all City beaches.

- **Support this year's International Beach Cleanup Day.** On Sunday September 18, 2004, thousand of volunteers will descend on City beaches for the 19th Annual International Coastal Cleanup. Along with cleaning the beach and documenting what litter is found, the aim is to also increase public awareness and participation in solving the problem of pollution.

APPENDIX A

Beach Quality and Safety: Beach Classifications



**THE NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH and MENTAL HYGIENE**

Beach Quality and Safety

Beach Classifications

Each beach is assigned a classification, as listed below, by NYCDOHMH based on the evaluation and evidence of information provided by past history and existing water quality data and trends, including regional hydrodynamics, sanitary and safety surveys, known spills or pollution events, site conditions, frequency of use, beach length, and proximity to potential pollution sources and storm water discharges.

OPEN	Open for Swimming and Bathing
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All of the following conditions are considered in order for a beach to be classified as open and approved for bathing:

1. Bathing beach water quality are in accordance with the following water quality standard for marine water beaches: Enterococci geometric mean shall not exceed 35 Colony Forming Units (CFU) per 100 ml for a series of five or more samples collected during a 30-day period.
2. Sanitary and safety surveys conducted are satisfactory to the Department; and
3. The epidemiological history is satisfactory to the Department. No repeated complaints/reports of illness/injury received from the public or from owners/operators of bathing beaches.

WET WEATHER ADVISORY	Advisory – Wet-weather conditions, swimming and bathing not recommended
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A Preemptive Standard is a threshold level of precipitation that, when exceeded, can lead to elevated levels of bacteria due to Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) and stormwater runoff, and may pose a public health risk. Swimming and bathing is not recommended in any area identified by the Department as being impacted by a Wet Weather Advisory, especially for people with underlying medical conditions and for young and elderly people who may be more likely to get sick if beach water is swallowed.

The Wet Weather Advisories are indicated as follows:

Beach	Rainfall Limit	Advisory Duration
South Beach, SI	1.5 inches in 6 hours	12 hours
Midland Beach, SI	1.5 inches in 6 hours	12 hours
Manhattan Beach, Bklyn	1.5 inches in 6 hours	12 hours
Kingsborough Community College, Bklyn	1.5 inches in 6 hours	12 hours
All Bronx Private Beaches and Douglaston, Qns	0.2 inches in 2 hours/ 0.4 inches in 24 hours	48 hours
Gerritsen Beach, Bklyn	0.2 inches in 2 hours/ 0.4 inches in 24 hours	72 hours

ADVISORY	Advisory – swimming and bathing not recommended
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An Advisory is issued to warn the public against water contact recreation when bacteria levels or other conditions may contribute to possible illness. NYCDOHMH will continue to monitor the beach to confirm if a public health risk is present. An Advisory is issued under the following conditions: when naturally occurring organisms or human influences may cause a continuous or reoccurring water quality exceedance, when a sanitary and safety survey or investigation reveals the presence of floatable debris, medical/infectious waste or toxic contaminants, petroleum products, and/or other contamination on the beach or evidence of sewage and wastewater discharge. Swimming and bathing is not recommended in any area identified by the Department as being impacted by an Advisory, especially for people with underlying medical conditions and for young and elderly people who may be more likely to get sick if beach water is swallowed.

CLOSED

Closed. Swimming and bathing temporarily not permitted.

City beaches may be classified as "Temporarily Restricted for Swimming and Bathing" when one or a combination of any of the following conditions exist:

1. Confirmed samples show that bathing beach water quality exceeds the following water quality standard for marine water beaches: Enterococci geometric mean shall not exceed 35 Colony Forming Units (CFU) per 100 ml for a series of five or more samples collected during a 30-day period.
2. Epidemiological data indicates a significant incidence of related illnesses or repeated complaints/reports of illness/injury received from beach patrons.
3. Sanitary and Safety Survey/Investigation: A sanitary and safety survey or an investigation reveals the presence of potentially hazardous amounts of floatable debris, medical/infectious waste, toxic contaminants, petroleum products or other contamination on the beach, or there is evidence of sewage and wastewater discharge in sufficient quantities that will adversely affect the quality of the beach water.
4. Any other environmental factors determined to be a public health or safety hazard by the NYCDOHMH.

Beaches can be contacted for Advisory status.

Last updated on 05/28/2004

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Michael R. Bloomberg, *Mayor*

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., *Commissioner*

nyc.gov/health

APPENDIX B

Beach Debris Item Survey Form

Investigator: _____

Beach: _____

Borough: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Time: ____:____

Debris Items	Yes	No
Bags		
Beverage Bottles (Glass)		
Beverage Bottles (Plastic) 2 liters or less		
Beverage Cans		
Clothing/Shoes		
Cups/Plates/Forks/Knives/ Spoons		
Food/Wrappers/Containers		
Six-Pack Holders		
Straws/Stirrers		
Oil/Lube Bottles		
Cigarettes/Cigarette Filters		
Tobacco Packaging/Wrappers		
Tires		
Condoms		
Diapers		
Syringes		
Tampons/Tampon Applicators		

Other: _____

APPENDIX C

Detailed Findings

Debris Items Found by Investigators at City Beaches

APPENDIX D

Photographs of NYC Beach Debris

Dead Rodent, Midland/South Beach



Syringe, Midland Beach



Trash in the Water, Midland /South Beach



Discarded Tire, Midland Beach



Tampon Applicator, Coney Island

