



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH lifts swimming advisories for Dauphin Island and Mississippi Sound

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Improved conditions on Dauphin Island and in Alabama waters west of the Dauphin Island Bridge, also known as Mississippi Sound, have led the Alabama Department of Public Health to remove no swimming advisories issued earlier this month following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. The advisories in these two areas are being lifted effective at 5 p.m. Friday.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "We have reassessed the need for precautionary advisories in these areas and find they are not now necessary. We will continue to monitor the situation and reassess the need for further advisories should the situation change."

Public health authorities plan to post two types of signage at the access points to bodies of water: public health advisory notices and public health precautionary notices.

Public health advisory notices bordered in red will be posted when the department has confirmed the presence of oil and strong precautions should be taken. The more stringent advisory signs read, "This beach has been impacted by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Please be aware that oil may not be visible from the shore. Oil in the water or on the beach poses little risk to the health of the general public if they remain out of the water and on the shore. Contact with oil may pose a risk of skin and eye irritation."

The lower level precautionary signs, bordered in green, will be posted when oil is not known to be present. Their purpose is to let beachgoers know that while oil has not been seen, there is no guarantee that no oil is present. These signs remind the public of specific health guidelines, such as not handling tar balls and avoiding skin contact with oil.

Both classifications of signs will provide toll-free telephone numbers for additional information. These numbers are as follows: for ADPH, 866-264-4073; to report oiled wildlife, 866-557-1401; and to report odor, 800-424-8802.

On June 4, individuals were advised not to swim in Alabama gulf waters or in bay waters immediately adjacent to Fort Morgan. On June 9, the no swimming advisory was expanded to include Bayou St. John, Terry Cove, Cotton Bayou, Old River or in Alabama waters west of the Dauphin Island Bridge, also known as Mississippi Sound.

Residents should continue to follow recommended protective measures.

Protective Measures

- Avoid direct skin contact with the oil.
- If you get oil or tar balls on your skin, wash with soap and water.
- Launder clothing as usual if you get oil on it.
- There is no need to use harsh detergents, solvents or other chemicals to wash oil from skin or clothing, and it is discouraged.

Food Advisories

- If a fish smells or tastes like oil, do not eat it.
- Wash hands before eating.

Odor

Some people also may be sensitive to any change in air quality, which could cause symptoms such as nausea, vomiting or headaches. Persons with these symptoms should consider staying indoors, ventilating your home with air conditioning, and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity. If these symptoms do not improve, you should then consider contacting your primary care physician or other health care provider for medical advice. If you have pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma or other respiratory illness, you should consider communicating with your physician if you feel symptomatic.

Updated information will be available at www.adph.org.