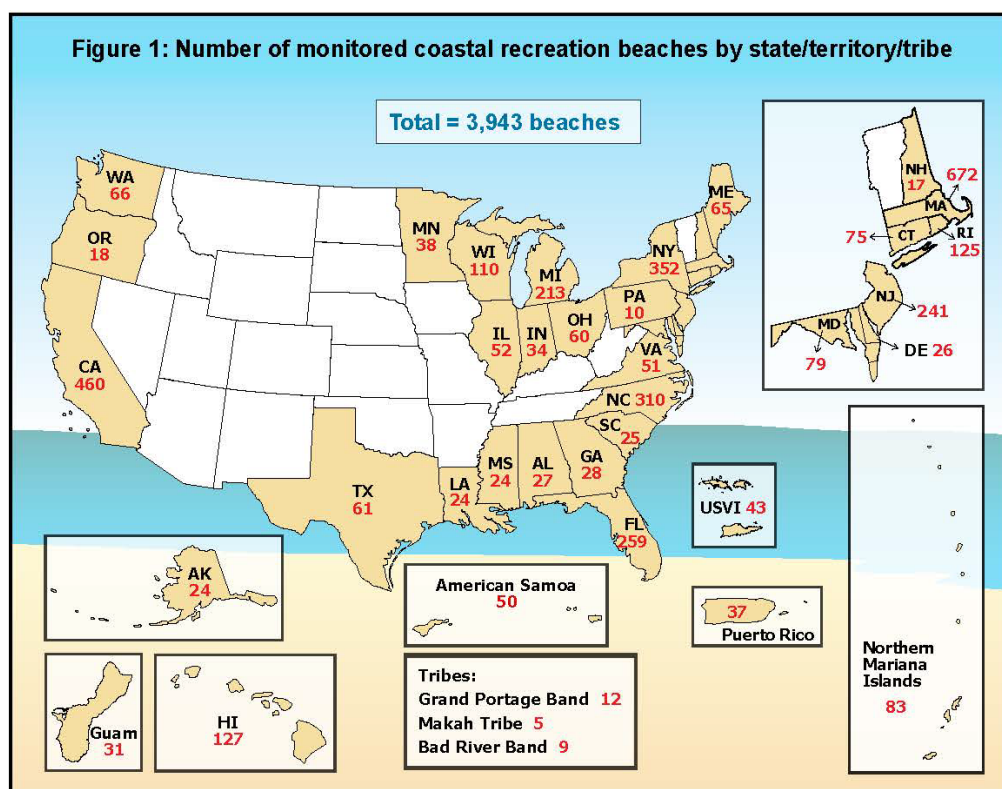


EPA's BEACH Report: 2018 Swimming Season

Introduction

This report summarizes information that states, territories, and tribes with coastal and Great Lakes beaches submitted to EPA as of June 30, 2019 about beach closings and advisories for the 2018 swimming season. The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 authorizes EPA to provide grants to eligible states, territories, and tribes to monitor their coastal beach waters 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. EPA awarded nearly \$9.8 million in grants in 2017 for the 2018 season. The BEACH Act requires that grant recipients report their coastal beach monitoring and notification data to EPA and that EPA maintain an electronic database of that data, accessible to the public. This report is based on that data. If any of those data have been updated since June 30, 2019, they can be found on EPA's website at: <https://watersgeo.epa.gov/BEACON2/about.html>.



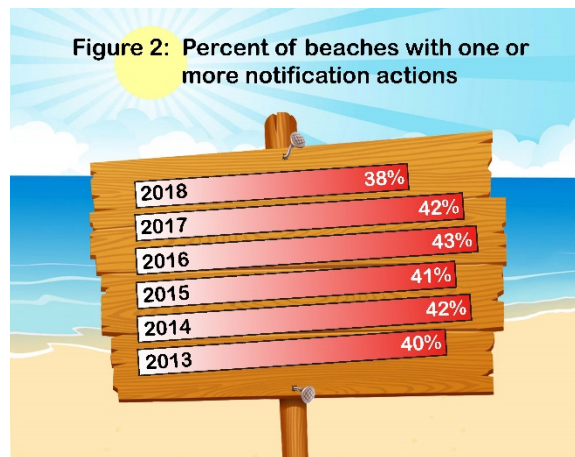
2018 Swimming Season Results

States, territories, and tribes take water samples to monitor the water at swimming beaches to see if levels of specific indicator bacteria exceed the water quality standards that apply to that water. Almost half (47 percent) of coastal and Great Lakes beaches in the United States were monitored in 2018. When monitoring results show exceedances, states, territories, and tribes either issue a beach advisory that warns people of possible risks of swimming or close the beach to public swimming. Some states and local agencies use models or other predictive tools in addition to water sampling as a basis for issuing notification actions at beaches. These advisories or closures stay in effect until monitoring shows that water quality complies with applicable standards.

How many beaches had notification actions?

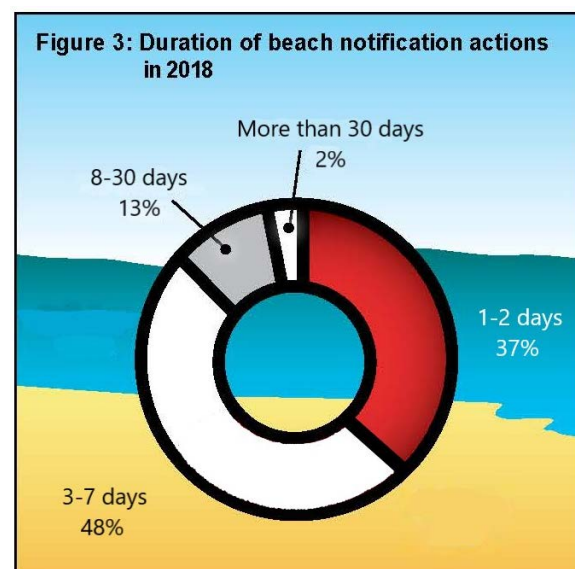
In 2018, 38 percent of the coastal beaches that were monitored (1,485 out of 3,943) had at least one advisory or closure. Figure 1 shows the number of beaches that were monitored in each state, territory, or tribe in 2018, and Figure 2 shows the percent of monitored beaches with advisories or closures over the past six years.

Beach advisories and closings can result from a variety of pollution sources: overflows from sewer systems; malfunctions at wastewater treatment plants; stormwater runoff after rainfall; harmful algal blooms; waste from boats; leaking septic systems; or pet and wildlife waste. To help minimize the risk to beachgoers, EPA for example is helping communities build and properly operate sewage treatment plants and is working to reduce overflows as much as possible.



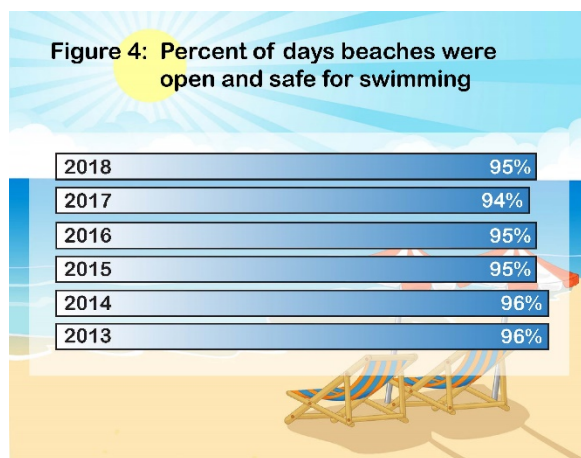
How many notification actions were issued and how long did they last?

States, territories, and tribes issued 11,071 notification actions (i.e., advisories or closings) during the 2018 swimming season. An advisory or closing is typically removed when follow-up monitoring proves that water quality complies with applicable standards. For most of the notification actions in 2018 (85 percent), water quality returned to normal and beaches were deemed safe for swimming within a week (Figure 3). About a quarter (22 percent) of the advisories and closures lasted only one day, and more than a third ended within two days.



What percentage of days were beaches under a notification action?

Beaches on U.S. coasts and along the Great Lakes were under an advisory or closed 5 percent of the time in 2018. EPA calculates the total available beach days and the number of beach days with advisories or closings to better track trends over time. To calculate total available beach days, we multiply the length of the beach season (in days) in each state, territory, and tribe by the number of its beaches. For 2018, EPA determined that 687,982 beach days were associated with the swimming seasons of 3,943 monitored beaches. Notification actions were reported on 35,530 days out of those 687,982 beach days. Figure 4 shows the percentage of beach days that beaches were open and without any advisories from 2013 through 2018.



Where Can I Find More Information?

To find out more about what you can do to help protect beaches, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/beaches/act-beach>.

To find out more about what affects beach health, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/beaches/learn-what-affects-beach-health>.

For general information about beaches, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/beaches>.

For current information about a specific beach, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/beaches/state-territorial-tribal-and-epa-beach-program-contacts>.

For beach information that states, territories, and tribes have reported to EPA, visit: <http://watersgeo.epa.gov/beacon2>.