



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Improvements in Gulf oil spill situation lead to reassessment of Public Health beach advisories

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Improvements in beach conditions for Baldwin and Mobile counties have led the Alabama Department of Public Health to reassess the need for swimming advisories.

“With the improving beach situation, the department feels that we can lift our swimming advisories,” Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said. “However, we recognize that even in the absence of visible oil, oil products may still be present in the sand or in the water. The department will replace red swimming advisory signs with yellow signs that outline several precautions for beachgoers.”

While the nature of the event is changing and large amounts of oil intruding on the beach are less likely, there may still be sporadic oil on or near the beaches. The department continues to encourage individuals not to enter waters if there is visible oil present in the water.

The department has been continually monitoring the 72-hour surface oil forecasts, as well as surveillance for the presence of heavy oil sheen, mousse and other oil products along Alabama beaches. Current trajectories do not show any likely oil impact and recent observation from both the beach and the air show only light sheen near shore. These improving conditions meet criteria established by the department to lift advisories.

The precautionary signs will recommend the following:

- Do not handle tar balls.
- Avoid contact with the oil.
- If you get oil or tar balls on your skin, wash with soap and water.
- If you get oil on your clothing, launder as usual.
- Do not use harsh detergents, solvents or other chemicals to wash oil from skin or clothing; they may promote absorption of the oil through the skin.

- If the odor causes nausea, vomiting, headache or breathing problems, leave the affected area.

The department will continue to monitor this evolving situation and will update beach notices as needed.

For more information contact the Alabama Department of Public Health at 1-866-264-4073. To report oiled wildlife, call 1-866-557-1401. To report odor, call 1-800-424-8802. Updated information is available at www.adph.org/

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