

Human Well-Being



Trusted Waters, Peace of Mind: Saskatchewan's Healthy Beaches Program



Spending time at the beach is an important part of summer life in Saskatchewan. The [Healthy Beaches Program](#) helps protect public health by monitoring water quality at popular swimming areas across the province. Led by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, provincial and regional parks, and community volunteers, the program helps protect public health by monitoring recreational water quality and providing timely public information.

Saskatchewan monitors water quality at selected priority public beaches. Beach water is tested for *E. coli* and microcystin (a toxin produced by blue-green algae), both of which may cause illness. If unsafe levels are identified, beach advisories are posted to inform the public of the potential risk and support informed decisions about entering the water. Warm summer temperatures and extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall and increased wave action, can influence bacteria and algae levels. Regular monitoring helps identify changing conditions and supports safe recreational water use at Saskatchewan's most popular beaches.

Recreational water is considered suitable for swimming and other in-water activities when:

- No single water sample contains more than 235 *E. coli* organisms per 100 millilitres; and
- Cyanobacteria or their toxins, including microcystin, remain below the established safe level of 10 micrograms per litre.

During the 2025 season, 47 beaches across Saskatchewan were monitored every one to two weeks between late June and early September. Priority beaches are selected based on visitor use and historical water quality results. The Roy Romanow Provincial Laboratory processed 2,093 bacterial samples and 419 toxin analyses to support this work. Monitoring found 105 water samples that exceeded *E. coli* limits and three samples with microcystin levels above safe guidelines.

When samples exceed limits, the local health authority may issue a recreational water advisory recommending that the public take temporary precautions, such as avoiding swimming, until conditions improve. Advisory signage may be posted at affected beaches to inform the public of potential health risks.

Recreational water advisories are not beach closures; beaches and swimming areas remain open, but users are encouraged to review posted advisory information and take appropriate precautions, particularly young children, pregnant individuals, older adults, and individuals who are immunocompromised. Monitoring results are also shared with partner ministries and agencies to support co-ordinated management of recreational water quality and lake health.

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Why It Matters

Safe and enjoyable beaches contribute to community well-being, tourism and quality of life across Saskatchewan. Regular water quality monitoring provides timely information to help beachgoers make informed decisions about recreational water activities and take appropriate precautions when necessary.

Over time, monitoring results also builds historical record that helps identify patterns and trends in recreational water quality. This information can improve understanding of beach-specific conditions and support public health responses.

By monitoring recreational water quality year after year, the Healthy Beaches Program supports informed decision-making and helps maintain public confidence in Saskatchewan's public beaches and swimming areas.

Link to Related Information

[Healthy Beaches Map](#)

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