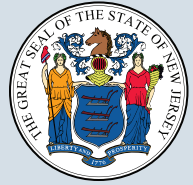


FACT SHEET: GOING TO THE BEACH

Report debris: **1-877-WARNDEP**



New Jersey continues to steadily recover from Superstorm Sandy. The hardest hit communities are rebuilding. Along many parts of the Shore, most signs of Sandy are gone. Businesses have reopened. Boardwalks are busy with early season visitors, water quality is excellent and New Jersey's beaches are ready for visitors. The following provides answers to some of the most common questions beachgoers may have as cleanup from this historic storm continues.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT STORM DEBRIS AT THE BEACH?

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and New Jersey Department of Health (DOH), in cooperation with municipal and county governments, are doing everything possible to ensure recreational beaches are safe and clear of debris. However, the ocean is dynamic. Currents and waves may uncover storm debris at any time. You should always be aware of your surroundings when entering the ocean. All beachgoers should use common sense and caution while on beaches and swimming. Always use beaches with lifeguards.

IS THERE MUCH STORM DEBRIS IN THE OCEAN?

Sandy's powerful storm surge generally pushed wreckage and debris toward the bays, streams and wetlands. This is where most of the water debris is being found.

HOW ABOUT THE BEACHES?

Virtually all of the debris on the beaches immediately after Sandy has since been removed. Our municipalities worked tirelessly to remove big debris, and then thoroughly raked the sand for any small pieces of debris.

WHAT'S BEING DONE TO ENSURE BEACH SAFETY THIS SUMMER?

New Jersey has an aggressive program to monitor the health and safety of our recreational beaches. This year the program is being expanded to include the following work:

AIR DEP aircraft will be flying over the coast all summer, looking for debris in addition to making observations about water quality. If debris is observed, the DEP will coordinate with the municipality or the state's debris removal contractors on marking and removing it.

WATER State water debris removal contractors are using side-scan sonar to search for storm debris in water off the beaches. They will use cranes on barges to remove debris when it poses a health or safety threat. This work is expected to continue throughout the summer.

LAND Municipal governments, as they do every season, conduct thorough safety assessments before opening beaches. The DEP and New Jersey Department of Health have advised municipalities and their lifeguard crews that areas in the surf zone just off the beaches may have steeper drops than in the past and that they should be alert for storm debris in these areas.

COULD BEACHES BE CLOSED IF DEBRIS IS FOUND? HOW WILL THE PUBLIC BE NOTIFIED?

Decisions on any beach closings will be made on a case-by-case basis, usually by local officials in consultation with the DEP and NJ Department of Health. In many cases it may be possible to simply move the designated swimming area a short distance. Any closings will be posted on www.njbeaches.org

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I SEE DEBRIS AT THE BEACH?

You should immediately contact a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, call the local police, the local health department, or the DEP hotline at **1-877-WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)** or by email to waterwaydebris@dep.state.nj.us

WHAT'S WATER QUALITY EXPECTED TO BE LIKE?

Pre-season water quality monitoring by the DEP indicated that water quality is within state and federal standards at all locations. Excellent water quality is anticipated throughout the summer.

HOW IS WATER QUALITY TESTED? WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The DEP administers the Cooperative Coastal Monitoring Program with the New Jersey Department of Health and local environmental health agencies. Recreational beach water quality monitoring is performed routinely on Mondays and throughout the week as necessary at ocean and bay monitoring stations. In addition, the DEP conducts regular aerial surveillance of the ocean. Water quality monitoring results can be found at www.njbeaches.org

For more information on waterway debris removal, FAQs on recreational boating, and other aspects of Sandy recovery, visit: www.state.nj.us/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/

