



City of Bridgeport Department of Health & Social Services

999 Broad Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
Telephone (203) 576-7680 * Fax (203) 576-8311

JOSEPH P. GANIM
Mayor

Maritza Bond, MPH
Director of Health and Social Services

Bathing Water Sampling & Beach Closure Policy

The Bridgeport Health Department conducts a seasonal bathing water sampling program at Lake Forest, Seabright Beach, Seaside Park and Pleasure Beach from the first Monday in June through Labor Day of each year. Bathing water samples are usually collected on Monday mornings by a sanitarian and driven to the Fairfield Health Department where the samples are picked up by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health Laboratory for analysis. If elevated levels of bacteria are detected in the bathing water samples, an advisory is issued to warn beachgoers against entering the water; swimming will then be prohibited until further testing indicates that the samples are done at an acceptable level (see side note).

In addition to banning swimming when laboratory tests indicate unacceptable high bacteria counts, the Bridgeport Health Department introduced a policy whereby swimming is automatically prohibited for a minimum of 24-hours following a rainfall that exceeds 1-inch; swimming is prohibited for 48-hours or more following rainfall of 2-inches or greater. The Bridgeport Health Department relies on rain gauge readings from the Bridgeport Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCA) to determine the level of rainfall. All plans for swimming advisories are coordinated with the Director of Health, Director of Public Facilities and the Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks Department handles signage at all public beach entrances.

The public may still visit the shoreline and use the beach area for recreation when a swimming advisory is in effect. The public simply cannot enter the water to swim. Signs to this effect are displayed at entrances to the beaches. Elevated bacterial levels in bathing water cause two types of health problems, skin irritations and gastrointestinal distress from ingesting contaminated water.

Swimming is permitted following rainfall less than 1-inch; so, the occurrence of rain alone will not necessarily cause a ban on swimming the following day. The public is advised to check with the Parks Department at 203-576-7233 or Recreation Department at 203-576-8080, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, to determine if a swimming advisory is in effect following rainfall. The public may also contact the Bridgeport Health Department at 203-576-7680, Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Beach closures are also posted on the City of Bridgeport website. In addition, the Bridgeport Health Department notifies private beach associations of swimming advisories, so they can inform their members of the risk.

Lake/fresh water samples are tested for E. Coil which need to be less than 235 MPN/100 ml

Marine/salt water samples are tested for Enterococcus which need to be less than 104 MPN/100 ml