



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Safe and Healthy Recreational Water Use Encouraged This Summer

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BURLINGTON – Memorial Day weekend in Vermont may include overheated marathon runners plunging into Lake Champlain, families dipping their toes into the slowly warming ponds, streams and lakes, and hoses filling above-ground pools near the barbeque.

The Health Department encourages all Vermonters to take full advantage of recreational water opportunities this weekend and throughout the summer, but to also use common sense, take precautions and be aware of health risks.

The Health Department, along with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation has developed an overall approach to water safety that includes guidance on how to avoid biological, chemical and physical hazards.

All state parks with swimming areas will be tested weekly this year and signage will be posted that marks the current water safety status.

Swimming, boating, wading and other healthy outdoor activities are recommended at managed, safe and healthy locations. Water contaminated with fecal matter from humans or other mammals can be a health risk.

“The most common measure of bacterial contamination in Vermont waterways is the amount of E.coli bacteria,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “A level above the EPA standard of 235 colony forming units for 100 milliliters of water means that the water is not suitable for swimming.”

Recreational water test kits can be ordered through the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory by calling 1-800-660-9997.

Anyone who suspects or notices a chemical spill or other source of contamination to a waterway can call the DEC at 802-241-3888 or (after hours) the Hazmat Hotline at 800-641-5005.

Physical hazards can wash up on shore or under the water, particularly after flooding. Debris, trash, broken glass and other sharp objects can all pose injury hazards to beach goers.

“The vast majority of swimming and boating and wading opportunities in the state are safe and we don’t want to throw a ‘wet blanket,’ over having fun in the water this year” Dr. Chen said. “We just to remind everyone of the potential risks. Wear a life vest when boating, supervise kids who are swimming, and be aware of currents before you swim.”

For more information visit:

- [Healthy Recreational Waters](#)
- [Swim Water Testing](#)

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