



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

Escambia County Health Department Pensacola, Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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MEDIA CONTACT:
Molly Payne-Hardin, desk 595-6410, cell 791-1604

Health Officials Post Oil Impact Notice for all Escambia County Gulf beach waters

PENSACOLA -- Due to the presence of oil products related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and the ways the oil is affected by dynamic changes in tide, current, and wind, the Escambia County Health Department is posting an Oil Impact Notice for the Gulf beach waters of Escambia County, Florida. This notice will remain in place until Escambia County Gulf beaches are no longer impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This notice includes the beaches under the control of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, the University of West Florida, and Perdido Key State Park.

An Oil Impact Notice means that if individuals see or feel oil products on the beach or in the water – such as an oily feeling on their skin, tar chips/balls that are too numerous to count or are buried in the sand, tar mats, oil mousse or an oil sheen/slick on the water -- they are advised to minimize potential negative health impacts and:

- Avoid wading, swimming, or entering the water.
- Avoid contact with oil and oily materials in the water or on the beach. Oil and tar may be buried beneath the sand – dig in the sand with care.
- Avoid contact with dead or dying fish and other wildlife.
- Young children (aged five years and younger), pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems should avoid skin contact with the sand and water that have been impacted. These individuals can walk on the sand with shoes and protect their skin from oil.
- If experiencing respiratory problems, leave the area and contact your physician, as you deem necessary.

Oil Impact Notice signs will be posted along the Escambia County beaches today, and will remain until such a time as the oil spill no longer affects Escambia County's beaches. The signs are intended to replace the previous and more temporary Health Advisories. Gulfside businesses, hotels and condominiums are being notified and asked to post information at their locations.

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Escambia County Health Department

1295 W. Fairfield Drive • Pensacola, Florida 32501-1107
John J. Lanza, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAP, CHD Director-Health

www.escambiahealth.com

850.595.6500



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For most people, occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended, will do no harm. However, some people are sensitive to the chemicals found in the crude oil and petroleum products. Those people may experience skin or eye irritation with even brief contact with oil.

Individuals should also follow these tips for avoiding potential health impacts from an oiled shoreline:

To minimize potential health impacts, individuals should always:

- If you feel an oily residue on your skin after swimming or walking on the beach, wash it off with a grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent and water. Do not re-enter water or walk on beach areas where the oily feeling was present.
- Those near Florida's Gulf Coast may detect an odor because of the oil spill. Some people are more sensitive to these odors and may experience nasal irritation and feelings of nausea. In combination with seasonal allergies, such as sensitivity to pollen, or pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, some people may experience more severe symptoms.
- Individuals experiencing respiratory symptoms that are aggravated by the odors from the oil spill should consider:
 - Staying indoors in air-conditioning and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity.
 - If symptoms do not improve, contact a primary care physician or other health care professional for medical advice.
 - Individuals who have pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma or other respiratory illnesses should contact their physician if feeling symptomatic.
- Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill, and if traveling through the area by boat take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor. If oil makes contact with the skin, wash it off with grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent and water.
- Do not fish in oil spill-affected waters.
- Do not harvest or eat dead fish, fish with oily residue, or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Avoid boating through oil slicks or sheens.
- Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.

Cleaning oil/tar from the skin

Individuals should avoid contact with tar balls. However, if an individual's skin comes into contact with tar:



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1. Wash with grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent and large amounts of water. Health officials discourage the use of gasoline, kerosene or other solvents to clean oil from skin.
2. If tar is not removed with grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent, scrape off the excess tar from your skin, apply another grease removing agent, such as mineral oil, and rinse your skin with large amounts of fresh water.
3. Remove contaminated clothing.
4. If symptoms or irritation occur, call a physician.

For more information contact:

- a. Escambia County Health Department at (850) 595-6700 and www.EscambiaHealth.com
- b. Escambia County Citizen's Information Line at 471-6600 from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CDT (Monday – Sunday) or www.EscambiaDisasterResponse.com
- c. Florida Oil Spill Information Line at (888) 337-3569

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