



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 2, 2010

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Health Officials Post Oil Impact Notices

OKALOOSA COUNTY - - Due to the presence of oil products on our beaches related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and that the amount of oil product on the beach and in the water changes daily due to dynamic changes in tide, current, and wind, the Okaloosa County Health Department will post oil impact notices. This replaces the strategy of post and rescinding health advisories for our local beaches. Therefore, any beach that had been under a health advisory will have beach signage replaced with an Oil Impact Notice. A sticker will be placed over the old sign today until new signs can be produced.

This notice will remain in place until Okaloosa County beaches are no longer impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. This notice currently applies to the following beach areas: Okaloosa Island from the Eglin property line to the west through the eastern boundary of Beasley Park and Destin beaches from the Okaloosa/Walton line west to the Pelican Beach Resort.

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. Do not water ski or use personal water craft in oil impacted waters.
- If oil product makes contact with skin, wash it off with grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent and water.
- Avoid contact with oil and oily materials in the water or on the beach. Oil product may be buried beneath the sand – dig in the sand with care. Oil product should not be collected for souvenirs. Oil product should not be put in the trash. Trained community workers are the only people authorized to remove and dispose of oil product from the beaches.
- Avoid contact with dead or dying fish or other aquatic life impacted by the oil. If you see animals needing rescue, call 311 - Option 0 in Okaloosa County.
- Avoid boating through oil slicks or sheens. Exercise caution when hoisting the boat anchor.
- Young children (aged five years and younger), pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems should avoid oil impacted beaches. Since air quality remains good, the issue of greatest concern is skin, eye, and mouth contact with oil product in the sand and water on oil impacted beaches. It is acceptable for these individuals to walk on the sand with shoes to protect their feet from oil product. These individuals should not clean the oil product off of their shoes. If no assistance is available, rubber gloves should be used.
- Keep pets off oil impacted beaches.
- Some people may detect an odor due to the oil. 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. Leave the beach area if you experience these symptoms.
- Individuals experiencing respiratory symptoms that are aggravated by the odors from the oil spill should leave the beach area and consider:
 - Staying indoors in air-conditioning and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity.



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- Contacting a primary care physician or other health care provider for medical advice, if symptoms do not improve.
- If individuals have pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma or other respiratory illnesses, contacting their healthcare professional if feeling symptomatic.

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 oil product. Those people may experience skin or eye irritation with even brief contact with oil product. However, if an individual's skin comes into contact with oil product:

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 oil product is not removed with grease-cutting liquid dishwashing detergent, scrape off the excess oil product from the skin, apply another grease removing agent, such as mineral oil, and rinse skin with large amounts of fresh water.
3. Remove contaminated clothing.
4. If symptoms or irritation occur, call a physician.

For more information:

- Visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com or call 850.833.9247.
- Call Okaloosa County Citizens Information Line at 311 – Option 8.
- Or call the Florida Oil Spill Information Line at 888.337.3569.

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