



Charlie Crist  
Governor

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Health advisory issued for portion of beach due to oil spill**

**FT WALTON BEACH** – Effective immediately, in response to oil mousse, tar mats, and extensive tar balls, the Okaloosa County Health Department in coordination with Okaloosa County Public Safety is issuing a health advisory for the following beach waters in Okaloosa County:

***Okaloosa Island from the Eglin property line (by the El Matador Condominiums on Santa Rosa Blvd), through the eastern boundary of Beasley Park***

The health department is posting health advisory signs at the affected area (a copy of the sign is attached). People can still participate in activities above the high tide line or on the dry sand.

#### **The health advisory signs advise to:**

- Avoid contact with the water (no wading, swimming or entering the water)
- Avoid contact with oil and oily materials in the water or on the beach
- Avoid contact with dead or dying fish or other water life
- If you see animals needing rescue, or have additional questions, call the Citizen's Information Line at 311 – Option 0
- If you have breathing problems, leave the area and contact your doctor, as necessary

The Okaloosa County Health Department will continue to work with Okaloosa County Public Safety, and will notify the public through the media and its website ([www.HealthyOkaloosa.com/Deepwater\\_Horizon](http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com/Deepwater_Horizon)), when the health advisory is no longer in effect.

#### **Consider these additional tips for avoiding negative health impacts from an oiled shoreline:**

- Avoid contact with tar balls. Trained professionals are cleaning up the beaches.
- 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 soap 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.
- Young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and individuals with underlying respiratory conditions should avoid the area.
- Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.
- 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 provider for medical advice.
  - Individuals who have pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma or other respiratory illnesses should contact their healthcare professional if feeling symptomatic.



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**For more information:**

- Okaloosa County Health Department: (850) 833-9247
- Okaloosa County: <http://www.okaloosaf.com>
- Okaloosa County Citizen's Information Line: Dial 311 – Option 8
- Florida Oil Spill Information Line: (888) 337-3569
- Florida Poison Information Centers: (800) 222-1222

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