



Charlie Crist  
Governor

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Dr. Chapman  
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### **Health notice issued for Destin Beaches due to oil spill**

**DESTIN** –The Okaloosa County Health Department is issuing a health notice in response to too numerous to count penny- to dime-sized tar balls on the wet sand and in the breaking surf along most of the following beach waters in Okaloosa County:

#### ***From the Okaloosa/Walton County Line to Pelican Beach Resort in Destin, FL***

The health department and Destin Beach Patrol have posted signs along the affected areas.

#### **The signs recommend:**

- Avoiding contact with the water when oil product is present (avoid wading, swimming or entering the water)
- Avoiding contact with oil and oily materials in the water or on the beach
- Avoiding 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

Due to the dynamic nature of the currents and changing wind directions, conditions may change rapidly either for the better or the worse. Residents and our visitors are encouraged to discuss their local beach conditions with the lifeguard to determine if conditions have improved or gotten worse.

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

- Avoid contact with tar balls or other oily residues, or trash stained with oil. Trained clean-up crews are cleaning the beaches.
- Do not swim or ski in areas affected by the oil spill.
- Do not catch fish for eating in oil spill-affected waters.
- Do not eat dead fish, fish with an oily residue, or fish that have a petroleum odor.
- Prevent pets from entering oil-contaminated areas.
- If oil products make contact with skin, wash it off with grease cutting dishwashing soap and water.
- On occasion you may detect an odor because of the oil product in the water. 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:
  - Leaving the beach area. Symptoms may improve with distance from the water.
  - Staying indoors in air-conditioning and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity.
  - If symptoms do not improve, contact your 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 unable to control their symptoms with their usual medications.

#### **Consider these additional tips for when boating or jet-skiing in or near an oiled shoreline:**

- Avoid boating or jet skiing through oil slicks, oil sheens, and oil mousse.
- Avoid boating or jet skiing in or around tar ball mats.



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- If traveling through the area by boat take precautions when hoisting the boat anchor to avoid splashing oil residue on your skin. If oil products make contact with skin, wash it off with grease cutting dishwashing soap and water.

**For more information:**

- Okaloosa County Health Department: visit [www.HealthyOkaloosa.com](http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com) or call (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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