

Beach Management Protocol, 2014

Preamble

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) are published by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care under the authority of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) to specify the mandatory health programs and services provided by boards of health.^{1,2} Protocols are program and topic specific documents which provide direction on how boards of health must operationalize specific requirement(s) identified within the OPHS. They are an important mechanism by which greater standardization is achieved in the province-wide implementation of public health programs.

Protocols identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services. Boards of health have the authority to develop programs and services in excess of minimum requirements where required to address local needs. Boards of health are accountable for implementing the standards including those protocols that are incorporated into the standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to assist in the prevention and reduction of water-borne illness and injury related to recreational water use at public beaches, and to assist boards of health in the delivery of local, comprehensive public beach management programs, which include, but are not limited to:

- Surveillance and inspection, including pre-season assessment and routine public beach surveillance;
- Management and response, including response to complaints and adverse events at public beaches and communication strategies for the public and stakeholders; and
- Reporting of Safe Water Program data elements to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the “ministry”) related to recreational water use at public beaches.

Public beaches within provincial parks are generally the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources; however, this is done in consultation with the board of health. The board of health is not responsible for routine monitoring of private residential beaches.

Recreational water quality is influenced by various environmental and built factors, including rainfall, wave action, water and ambient air temperatures, waterfowl, industrial waste discharges, storm water outflows, septic system discharges, and agricultural run-off.

Reference to the Standards

Table 1: identifies the standard and requirement to which this protocol relates.

Standard	Requirement
Safe Water	<p>Requirement #1: The board of health shall report Safe Water Program data elements in accordance with the <i>Beach Management Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Drinking Water Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Recreational Water Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).</p> <p>Requirement #3: The board of health shall conduct surveillance of public beaches and public beach water illnesses of public health importance, their associated risk factors, and emerging trends in accordance with the <i>Beach Management</i></p>

Standard	Requirement
	<p><i>Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).</p> <p>Requirement #10: The board of health shall ensure that the medical officer of health or designate is available on a 24/7 basis to receive reports of and respond to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse events related to safe water, such as reports of adverse drinking water on drinking-water systems governed under the Health Protection and Promotion Act or the Safe Drinking Water Act; • Reports of water-borne illnesses or outbreaks; • Safe water issues arising from floods, fires, power outages, or other situations that may affect water safety; and • Safe water issues relating to recreational water use including public beaches <p>in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act; the <i>Beach Management Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Drinking Water Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); the <i>Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current); and the <i>Recreational Water Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).</p> <p>Requirement #13: The board of health shall reduce risks of public beach use by implementing a beach management program in accordance with the <i>Beach Management Protocol, 2008</i> (or as current).</p>

Operational Roles and Responsibilities

Refer to the *Recreational Water Protocol, 2014* (or as current) for OPHS requirements pertaining to public beaches. Additional updated and technical details, formerly found in the *Beach Management Protocol, 2008*, can be found in the *Beach Management Guidance Document, 2014*.³

References

1. Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Ontario Public Health Standards. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2008 [revised 2014 May 1; cited 2014 May 1]. Available from: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/ophs_2008.pdf
2. *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7. Available from: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h07_e.htm.
3. Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Beach Management Guidance Document, 2014. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014. Available from: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/guidance/guide_beach.pdf

