



CHARLIE CRIST  
Governor

SECRETARY MICHAEL W. SOLE  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

DAVID HALSTEAD  
State Coordinating Officer

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**CONTACT: PUBLIC INFORMATION (ESF 14): (850) 921-0217**

## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ESTABLISHES LONG-TERM OIL IMPACT HEALTH ADVISORY GUIDANCE FOR COUNTIES**

**TALLAHASSEE** – In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Gulf coast impacted counties has established new long-term criteria for the issuance and rescission of health advisories due to the oil spill that impacted Florida's northwest coast. This replaces earlier guidance, developed to provide visitors health information when visiting Florida's beaches.

"This guidance offers county health departments and our partners along northwest Florida's beautiful coastline specific criteria to aid in long-term decision-making to notice or rescind health advisories related to an oil spill," said State Surgeon General Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. "The Florida Department of Health remains committed to providing the best information to our residents and visitors, so they can make the appropriate health decisions for themselves and their families."

Following the successful "capping" and "killing" of the oil well in July, DOH, in coordination with the DEP and impacted counties revised guidance for the future issuance and rescission of health advisories for impacts of oil products on northwest Florida's beaches.

The guidance gives counties with Oil Impact Notices currently in place and those that may consider health advisories in the future the science-supported criteria, based on two levels of potential impacts:

- Tier 1 - visual presence of *extensive* oil (oil mousse, oil sheen that cannot be easily avoided, tar balls too numerous to avoid or water quality sampling data that *exceeds* established human health thresholds levels for chemicals of concern).

If beach conditions meet Tier 1 triggers, DOH, in coordination with local officials may decide to issue health advisories urging residents and visitors to not enter waters or public bathing areas that pose significant health threats

- Tier 2 - visual presence of oil (patches of oil mousse, oil sheen and/or tar balls in quantities easily avoided or water quality sampling data *below* established human health threshold levels for chemicals of concern).

If beach conditions meet Tier 2 triggers, DOH, in coordination with local officials, will issue appropriate public health messages and no health advisory posting will be recommended.

Counties may coordinate rescission of advisories if there are seven days of no visual presence of extensive oil (oil mousse, oil sheen that cannot be easily avoided, or tar balls too numerous to avoid), water quality sampling data that shows chemical levels are below established human health exposure thresholds, and a visual inspection of the sand shows no health risk.

A full copy of the Concept of Operations is attached.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Visit [www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com) to learn more about Florida's response to the Deepwater Horizon incident, or follow [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert](http://www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert).

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