

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Acting Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND DRINKING WATER BRANCH

EHS Circular Letter #2020-31

TO: Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians

FROM: Lori J. Mathieu, Branch Chief

DATE: May 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Beaches and Swimming Areas – COVID 19 Guidance

The purpose of this Circular Letter is to provide information to directors of health and chief sanitarians regarding COVID-19 and the use of freshwater or saltwater for swimming as many beaches and swimming areas are scheduled to open Memorial Day Weekend.

In response to a request for information regarding COVID-19 and swimming, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) informed the Department of Public Health (DPH) that, at this time, it is not aware of cases of COVID-19 caused by the recreational use of either freshwater or saltwater for swimming. DPH also conducted research and came to the same conclusion as the CDC. Testing for COVID-19 in recreational waters at swimming areas is not recommended at this time. Routine testing to determine the safety of the recreation water that is routinely conducted throughout the swimming season is adequate for protecting public health.

Both DPH and CDC find that complying with social distancing and face covering requirements while on the beach are very important in reducing the potential risk of contracting COVID-19. Therefore, during this public health emergency, DPH recommends that everyone adhere to federal and state guidance regarding COVID-19, including [CDC “social distancing” guidance](#), Governor Ned Lamont’s [executive orders](#), including [Executive Order 7B](#), which requires any person in a public place in Connecticut who is unable to or does not maintain a safe social distance of approximately six feet from every other person to cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face-covering, and [DECD’s guidance](#) regarding “Stay Safe, Stay Home”. In addition, if individuals are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because they are aged 65 years or older or because they have a serious long-term health problem, it is particularly important for them to take actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-What-You-Can-Do-High-Risk.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact DPH’s Recreation Program at (860) 509-7334.

c: Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA, Deputy Commissioner, DPH
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