



News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Visit Pensacola looks forward to welcoming visitors to area beaches
for a fun-filled holiday weekend**
Pensacola Area Beaches Not Affected by Health Warnings

Pensacola, Fla. (June 30, 2016) - Health and tourism officials want the public to know that the beaches of Escambia County and the Pensacola Bay Area are safe and open to the public, according to the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia).

There is no indication of any health hazard in the waters of the Pensacola Bay Area.

"Escambia County currently does not have any advisories issued for local marine waters," said FDOH-Escambia Environmental Health Director Robert Merritt. "This week's and last week's sampling did not indicate that Enterococci bacteria was at levels that required the issuance of an advisory."

The beaches of Pensacola, including Gulf Islands National Seashore, Park East, Casino Beach, Park West, Fort Pickens, Johnson Beach and Perdido Key, are all open to the public for swimming.

"Pensacola Beach and Perdido Key water conditions are healthy and we're looking forward to welcoming families and guests for a safe and fun July 4th weekend," said Steve Hayes, president of Visit Pensacola.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the FDOH has issued temporary health advisories related to water quality in two Florida Panhandle counties. Contrary to reports, no Gulf of Mexico beaches were closed to swimming.

The advisories are quite common after heavy rains and thunderstorms, as stormwater runoff drains into local waterways. The advisories are often rescinded within 24 to 48 hours.

Recent water quality testing in Escambia County was all clear. According to Florida Health reports, 10 beaches, bays and bayous around Pensacola were sampled for the presence of enterococci bacteria between June 20-27, and all test results came back good.

Florida Healthy Beaches Program Categories are:

- * Good = 0-35 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water**
- * Moderate = 36-70 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water**
- * Poor = 71 or greater Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water**

If an enterococci result is observed to exceed 70, and a resampling result also exceeds this value, then an advisory is issued for the sampling site.

The rest of the Florida Panhandle's water quality testing remains satisfactory at this time. Health officials will continue to monitor the bacteria levels of all beaches along the Gulf Coast.

Media Note: For interviews or for more information about Visit Pensacola, contact Steve Hayes at (850) 435-8703 or email shayes@visitpensacola.com.

For more up-to-date information about the water quality of Escambia County, click here. To visit the Florida Healthy Beaches Program, go to: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/beach-water-quality/>.

About Visit Pensacola

Visit Pensacola leads the effort of economic development through tourism in Escambia County. Comprised of more than 150 member businesses, Visit Pensacola's mission is to lead, connect, collaborate, communicate and support the community vision of tourism. Visit Pensacola serves as the central body responsible for building tourism as an economic engine for the community. For more information about Visit Pensacola, call 1-800-874-1234 (toll-free) or go to <http://www.VisitPensacola.com>.

