



# GUIDELINES ON RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY

Volume 1 Coastal and Fresh Waters



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Guidelines on recreational water quality. Volume 1: coastal and fresh waters

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Acronyms and abbreviations</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
Recommendations .....	x
Management advice and guideline values .....	xv
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope .....	2
1.2 Recreational water safety framework .....	4
1.3 Audience and roles .....	5
1.4 Cross-cutting and emerging issues .....	8
References .....	9
<b>2 Health-based targets and surveillance</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 Health-based targets .....	11
2.2 Public health surveillance .....	16
References .....	20
<b>3 Recreational water safety planning</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1 RWSP structure and development .....	22
3.2 System assessment .....	24
3.3 Monitoring .....	32
3.4 Management and communication .....	34
3.5 Review of RWSPs .....	39
References .....	42
<b>4 Faecal pollution</b> .....	<b>43</b>
4.1 System assessment .....	44
4.2 Monitoring .....	47
4.3 Beach classification based on sanitary survey and water quality .....	51
4.4 Management and communication .....	56
4.5 Research needs .....	58
References .....	59
<b>5 Harmful algal blooms</b> .....	<b>61</b>
5.1 Toxic cyanobacteria in freshwater and brackish water bodies .....	61
5.2 Toxic algae and cyanobacteria in coastal water bodies .....	77
5.3 Public communication .....	82
5.4 Research needs .....	83
References .....	85
<b>6 Other microbial hazards</b> .....	<b>89</b>
6.1 System assessment .....	89
6.2 Monitoring .....	97
6.3 Management and communication .....	98
6.4 Research needs .....	100
References .....	101

<b>7</b>	<b>Beach sand</b>	<b>105</b>
7.1	System assessment	105
7.2	Monitoring	112
7.3	Management and communication	114
7.4	Research needs	116
	References	117
<b>8</b>	<b>Chemicals</b>	<b>121</b>
8.1	System assessment	121
8.2	Monitoring	125
8.3	Management and communication	126
8.4	Research needs	126
	References	127
<b>9</b>	<b>Aesthetics and nuisance</b>	<b>128</b>
9.1	System assessment	128
9.2	Monitoring	132
9.3	Management and communication	133
9.4	Research needs	136
	References	137

## Figures

- Fig. 0.1. Recreational water safety framework for recommendations and management advice
- Fig. 1.1. Outline of the guidelines according to a recreational water safety framework
- Fig. 1.2. Stakeholders in recreational water environments
- Fig. 2.1. Public health surveillance and risk communication process for recreational waters
- Fig. 3.1. Inputs into recreational water bodies
- Fig. 4.1. Flowchart for assessing recreational water environments
- Fig. 5.1. Alert level framework for monitoring and managing cyanobacteria in recreational water bodies
- Fig. 5.2. Alert Level 1 conditions observed as streaks, specks and Secchi disk transparency
- Fig. 5.3. Simple guidance for checking presence of potentially unsafe levels of non-scum-forming cyanobacteria
- Fig. 5.4. Identification of control measures to reduce catchment nutrient loads
- Fig. 7.1. Conceptualization of dispersion and fate of microorganisms in beach sand

## Tables

- Table 1.1. References for hazards indirectly related to coastal and fresh water quality for recreational water users
- Table 1.2. Examples of actors and functions for management of recreational water quality
- Table 2.1. Guideline values for microbial quality of coastal and freshwater recreational waters
- Table 3.1. Components of recreational water safety planning
- Table 3.2. Types of information identified by sanitary surveys
- Table 3.3. Simple matrix for ranking risks
- Table 3.4. Examples of control measures and related operational monitoring
- Table 4.1. Numbers of faecal pathogens and indicator organisms in raw sewage
- Table 4.2. Recommended verification monitoring schedule
- Table 4.3. Example of a classification matrix for faecal pollution of recreational water environments
- Table 5.1. Guideline values for cyanotoxins relevant to human health
- Table 5.2. Criteria to prioritize water bodies for cyanobacterial bloom monitoring
- Table 5.3. Overview of measures to suppress cyanobacterial proliferation by influencing internal water body processes
- Table 5.4. Examples of sampling strategies for particular monitoring objectives

Table 5.5. Marine algal toxins relevant to human health
Table 6.1. Microorganisms of possible concern in recreational water
Table 6.2. Risk matrix for organisms of concern
Table 7.1. Selected microorganisms in beach sand
Table 8.1. Screening values for indicative chemicals in recreational waters

## Boxes

Box 3.2. Hazard and risk definitions
Box 3.3. Content of incident response plans
Box 3.4. Checklist for development of RWSPs
Box 5.3. Criteria for establishing whether algal or cyanotoxins are likely causes of symptoms presented
Box 7.2. Beach sand sampling and analysis
Box 7.4. Suggested communication messages for the general public and beach managers

## Examples

Example 2.1. Outbreak identification and incident response following an open-water swim event at Strathclyde Loch, Scotland
Example 2.2. Leptospirosis – athlete participation in Eco-Challenge event, Malaysian Borneo
Example 2.3. Swimmer's itch and sea lice
Example 3.1. Case study on multi-stakeholder management
Example 4.1. The Safeswim predictive model for Auckland, New Zealand
Example 4.2. Beach classification worked example
Example 4.3. Actions for provisional beach classification
Example 5.1. Algal blooms and citizen science
Example 5.2. Management of Moorea blooms in Moreton and Deception bays, Queensland, Australia
Example 7.1. A sand related outbreak in Azores, Portugal
Example 7.3. Beach sand classification under the Blue Flag award in Portugal
Example 8.1. Potential PFAS contamination in Australia
Example 9.1. Aesthetic revulsion to water colour produced by a nontoxic algal bloom in Spain
Example 9.2. Visual inspection for aesthetics and microbial water quality in Spain
Example 9.3. The My Beach, Your Beach initiative in Scotland
Example 9.4. Litter picks

# Foreword

Recreational use of water can have major benefits for health and well-being. From children playing in a river to families relaxing on a beach, from people taking part in water sports to observing waterside nature, all shapes and sizes of bodies – be they oceans, lakes or rivers – of water can uplift the spirit and enhance physical and mental well-being. Clean, well-managed waterfronts are also a focal point for communities and an economic draw for tourist and sporting events.

Yet, human activity and climate change are impacting the quality and safety of our waterways. Popular swimming locations may become contaminated by overflows of untreated sewage, runoff of animal excreta from nearby farms, or algal blooms triggered by high nutrient loads. Some sites may also be affected by chemical pollution from industrial activities or become polluted by beach users themselves through poor sanitation and litter. This contamination erodes the benefits to well-being and economic potential of the site, as well as potentially causing illness for water users.

In order to make waterside environments safe and fun for all users, now and in the future, these health risks must be carefully assessed and managed.

This update to the guidelines for safe recreational water environments provides health-based guidance for setting national water quality standards and implementing preventive risk management at the local level. Risk management approaches monitor and reduce sources of pollution, including tools to let users know in real time when it is safe to swim.

The guidelines should be implemented in conjunction with management of other beach-related health risks such as drowning and sun exposure and balanced against measures to protect native ecosystems.

Through implementation of these guidelines, we can all play a part to ensure that happy memories are made at the beach, the lake, and the river for generations to come.



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