



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEACH CLOSURE FOR PORTION OF BEACH IN HANCOCK COUNTY *SOME HARRISON AND JACKSON COUNTY BEACHES STILL UNDER ADVISORIES*

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR), and the Mississippi State Department of Health issued a beach closure Wednesday for a portion of the beach in Hancock County extending from Nicholson Avenue to the Silver Slipper Casino. This area includes Mississippi beach monitoring sites 1, 2 and 3. This area is being closed due to a large number of small tar balls and tar patties with dense coverage in some places making beach access difficult. In consultation with Hancock County officials, the agencies agree that access should be **closed to public use until clean up operations have finished**. Clean up is expected to take two to three days.

Beach advisories, not beach closures, remain in effect in Harrison County from Third Avenue (Henderson Point) in Pass Christian on the west to Azalea Avenue in Biloxi on the east. MDEQ and the Beach Monitoring Task Force recommend that people avoid contact with oil-related materials such as tar balls and tar mats and stay out of the water if these materials are visible. These beaches are not closed and beach goers may continue to use and enjoy these beaches. This area includes Mississippi beach monitoring sites 5, 6, 7, 7A, 8, 9, 10, 10A, 11, 11A, 12, 12A, 13, and a portion of 12B.

A Jackson County advisory also remains in effect and includes the area from Main Street in the Belle Fountain area west to Seashore Avenue. This encompasses existing beach monitoring sites 17 and 15A.

Information and maps of these beach monitoring locations are available at:

<http://www.usm.edu/gcrl/msbeach/index.cgi>. MDEQ and the Beach Monitoring Task Force will continue to advise the public when oil-related materials are found. The nature of this oil spill is such that patches of these type materials could show up in other areas in the near future.

The agencies advise people to use common sense and take appropriate precautions if coming in contact with oil materials:

- Avoid direct skin contact with the oil.
- If you get oil on your skin, wash it off with soap and water.
- Wash your hands before eating to avoid accidentally swallowing oil.
- If you get oil on clothing, wash it in the usual way.
- Prolonged exposure to the oil may cause some to have a skin rash.
- There is no need to use harsh detergents, solvents or other chemicals to wash oil from your skin or clothing, and their use is discouraged.

More information and links about MDEQ's and DMR's roles in oil spill response are available at www.deq.state.ms.us/oilspill and www.dmr.ms.gov. The website for the Mississippi State Department of Health is: www.msdh.state.ms.us.

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