



COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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New Ocean Water Report Shows Beach Closures in Orange County Caused by Sewage Spills are at a 35-Year Low

(Santa Ana, CA) – The OC Health Care Agency’s 2021-2022 Biennial Ocean, Harbor & Bay Water Quality Report is now available online and provides a yearly analysis of bacteriological water quality data over a 22-year period for Orange County’s ocean recreational waters. The report also incorporates historical data during the 35-year period from 1987-2022.

Yearly data and trends are included that represent the period from 2000-2022 since California Assembly Bill 411 (AB 411) regarding bacteriological water quality has been in place to ensure ocean water quality meets standards to protect public health. Major findings of the report include:

- A total number of 85 sewage spills were reported to the Water Quality Team in 2022, which was well below the 33-year average of 184 spills per year. One spill carried over from 2021 to 2022.
- In 2022, 4% of the 85 sewage spills reported resulted in ocean, harbor and bay water closures representing a total of three ocean water closures for the year.
- Blockages in pipelines have been responsible for an average of 72% of all beach closures since 1999. The major causes of pipeline blockages during this period include the infiltration of roots (31%), buildup of grease (25%), and unknown sources (22%).
- Rain advisories are issued when bacterial levels are elevated and can cause illness to swimmers, surfers and divers. In 2022, twelve rain advisories were issued resulting in a total of 46 rain advisory days for the year.

The full report, which includes details related to sewage spills as well as ocean, harbor and bay water closures, was prepared by the OC Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Water Quality Team and is available at <https://ocbeachinfo.com/wp-content/uploads/OC-Ocean-Water-Quality-Report-2021-2022.pdf>.

The Water Quality Team is responsible for protecting the public from exposure to ocean and bay waters that may be contaminated with sewage or may cause illness along Orange County’s coastal areas. To learn more, visit www.ocbeachinfo.com.

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