



PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT ON CONTINUED BEACH CLOSURE 24 MAY 2018

At the Department of Public Works Water Resources' Division, our priorities are protecting human health and the health of our waterways and being partners in residents' and visitors' enjoyment of Lake Champlain.

The City of Burlington has been sampling and evaluating test results adjacent to the recent sanitary sewer overflow [event](#) (see statement), including in wetlands and an outfall to Lake Champlain. Due to a paving contractor's error, a sewer line became filled with debris and led to a discharge of approximately 500 gallons at street level. Additionally, as part of regular water quality monitoring during the spring and summer months, we have conducted sampling offshore at various beach access points.

Regular test results at these points off shoreline have come back well within allowable United States Environmental Protection Agency limits. However, there are high levels of bacteria in the wetland and in the outfall to Blanchard Beach (near shoreline). In the interest of public health and out of an abundance of caution, we will keep Blanchard Beach (South & North) closed until we ensure the upstream bacteria load has been reduced. Signs are posted at these beach locations.

After consultation with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Public Works' Water Resources team will be flushing the wetland that currently has high bacteria levels. We will conduct regular testing at this location and other downstream areas to monitor the bacteria concentrations. We expect this will decrease the concentration in the wetland and dilute the load as it leaves the wetland, and will also increase die-off of the bacteria as it is exposed to sunlight in the open lake. One potential short-term outcome is a high load near the shoreline as the wetland empties. This will eventually dilute and dissipate. Other options were considered such as applying lime to the wetland - which would kill bacteria, but would have potentially significant impacts on the surrounding ecosystem.

We are continuing to sample and analyze results. Once bacteria levels near shoreline and in the wetland are within safe limits, we will re-open the beaches. We have re-emphasized to our contractor and City staff that contractors must notify Public Works and allow City staff to inspect when there is any suspicion of debris (sediment, bricks, asphalt, concrete etc) having entered our collection system (storm system, sewer pipes, sewer or storm manholes). Additionally, we will bill the contractor for the cost of our remedial action. We will post further information after new sample results come in and are analyzed.

If you have any concerns about water quality, please call our 24/7 number at 802-863-4501.
For media inquiries, please contact Rob Goulding, rgoulding@burlingtonvt.gov/802-540-0846

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