

Safe to Swim Workgroup Meeting Work Group Background

July 20, 2018

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Maximizing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Water Quality Data Collection and Dissemination and Ensuring that Collected Data are Maintained and Available for Use by Decision-makers and the Public


December 1, 2008

An organizational structure built on decentralized, **issue-specific workgroups** that operate within common policies and guidelines defined by the Monitoring Council.

A single, global point of entry (theme-based web portals) developed (Figure 2), designed around intuitively clear questions that are readily understood by managers, the public, and scientists:


- Is our water safe to drink?
- **Is it safe to swim in our waters?**
- Is it safe to eat fish and shellfish from our waters?
- Are our aquatic ecosystems healthy?
- What stressors and processes affect our water quality?

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- Under the oversight of the Monitoring Council, a new Safe-to-Swim Workgroup was convened in 2010 to coordinate monitoring and assessment of swimming safety statewide, expanding the focus to include inland freshwater swimming, and to manage and enhance the My Water Quality web portal "Is It Safe to Swim In Our Waters?".

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- The collaborative Beach Water Quality Workgroup initially formed in Southern California in 1998 to coordinate ocean beach water quality related monitoring, pollution abatement, public education, and public notification efforts.
 - In 2004 the Central/Northern California Ocean and Bay Water Quality Monitoring Group was formed with the same mission.
 - In November 2015, Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program staff from the Lahontan, North Coast, and Central Valley Regional Water Boards volunteered to coordinate monitoring and assessment of swimming safety for inland waters, forming the Inland Beaches Workgroup

“Safe to Swim” Workgroup 2013 Triennial Audit Report

1. Strategy, objectives, design
 - a. **The purpose** of the group is to coordinate the monitoring and assessment of water quality issues affecting swimming safety and also to report that information “Safe to Swim” Workgroup 2013 Triennial Audit Report December 2, 2013 to decision makers and the public through the Safe to Swim Water Quality web portal.
 - b. To ensure that the Safe to Swim "My Water Quality" web portal will best serve California, **the workgroup addresses two primary questions:**
 - i. *What do agency decision makers and the public really want to know about swimming safety on a local, regional and statewide basis?*
 - ii. *How can we best inform decision making?*
 - c. To assist the “Safe to Swim” Workgroup the “Data Management” Workgroup identified several specific questions which will help address how the primary two questions are answered
 - i. *What are the problems in data management?*
 - ii. *What data sets should be a priority for access?*
 - iii. *Where are the data gaps?*
 - iv. *What data restrictions currently exist?*



In addition, the workgroup has produced a priority list of information and tasks which will help address public desires. This priority list identified 13 items of interest amongst 3 separate “Safe to Swim” Categories:

- “What are the current threats to my beach water quality?”
- “Is it safe to swim at fresh water beaches?”
- “What water quality data is available?”

Proposed 2013 Workgroup Goals

Integrate Safe to Swim website with existing smartphone applications and websites (Beach Report Card and The Swim Guide).



Conduct informational survey of monitoring entities to determine “what agency decision makers want to know about swimming safety on a local, regional and statewide basis and how to best inform decision making.” Workgroup meeting/subcommittee is needed to review and discuss the survey before sending it



Develop priority list for addressing problems in data management and restrictions; review Beach Watch/CEDEN database for gaps, barriers to use, etc.



Expand the coverage of Safe to Swim by adding inland waters to Safe to Swim Portal website.



Develop recommendations for long-term agency involvement and financial support of Safe to Swim portal and workgroup



2011 Safe to Swim Work Group Priorities - 2011

Priority	Question/category	Item of Interest
1	What are the current threats to my beach water quality	Has there been a recent sewage/ hazardous spill warning alert that might affect my beach?
2	Is it safe to swim at fresh water beaches	Make available applicable SWAMP (including TMDL) data from CEDEN into safe to swim portal
3	Is it safe to swim at fresh water beaches	List of high priority streams and swimming areas for fresh water
4	Is it safe to swim at fresh water beaches	Make available applicable CIWQS data into safe to swim portal
5	What are the current beach conditions	Incorporate ocean observing system APIs
6	Is it safe to swim at fresh water beaches	Incorporate latest 303d list information with lines of evidence on the Safe to swim portal
7	What water quality data is available	Work with creating flow through data process for presenting wholesale data from CEDEN
8	What water quality data is available	Incorporate NGO databases not yet in CEDEN
9	What are the current threats to my beach water quality	Incorporate recent rainfall/rain gauge data
10	What are the current beach conditions	Create phone application for access to safe to swim beach information
11	What are the current beach conditions	Incorporate actual beach conditions in a wiki
12	What are the current beach conditions	Create phone application for individuals to upload current information (into wiki/network)
13	What are the current beach conditions	Incorporate coastal camera network/ surfline information

View the new **Harmful Algal Blooms Portal**.
Increasing due to drought and climate change, HABs are threatening the use of our waters.

<https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/index.html>

Welcome to My Water Quality

Is Our Water Safe to Drink?



Safe drinking water depends on a variety of chemical and biological factors regulated by a number of local, state, and federal agencies. [Learn more >>](#)

Are Our Aquatic Ecosystems Healthy?



The health of fish and other aquatic organisms and communities depends on the chemical, physical, and biological quality of the waters in which they live. [Learn more >>](#)

Is it Safe to Swim in Our Waters?



Swimming safety of our waters is linked to the levels of pathogens that have the potential to cause disease. [Learn more >>](#)

Are harmful algal blooms affecting our waters?



Harmful algal blooms can make water unsafe for swimming and other recreational activities. The toxins they produce can harm pets, livestock, and people. [Learn more >>](#)

Is it Safe to Eat Fish From Our Waters?



Aquatic organisms are able to accumulate certain pollutants from the water in which they live, sometimes reaching levels that could harm consumers. [Learn more >>](#)

Is There Monitoring Data Near Me?



A number of regional monitoring programs throughout California collect and display water quality and aquatic ecosystem health data. [Learn more >>](#)

Swimming Safety Information

Show County Info:



Beach water quality monitoring and strong pollution prevention measures are critical for protecting beach goers from waterborne diseases. Monitoring is performed by city and county health agencies, publicly owned sewage treatment plants, other dischargers, environmental groups and numerous citizen-monitoring groups.

View Monitoring and Assessment Information

- Click on a **county** or;
- Select from the **Show County** info menu.

Questions Answered

- Can I swim at my coastal beach?
- What are the current swimming advisories for my coastal beach?
- How do harmful algal blooms affect swimming safety?
- What are the long-term trends of bacteria at my coastal beach?
- Which beaches, lakes, and streams are listed by the State as impaired for swimming?
- How are we improving swimming safety?

California Safe-to-Swim Workgroup

Sub-Workgroups

- Beach Water Quality Workgroup of Southern California (*coming soon*)
- Central/Northern California Ocean and Bay Water Quality Monitoring Group (*coming soon*)
- [Inland Beaches Workgroup](#)

[Progress Reports and Goals](#) | [Tools](#) | [More Information](#)

https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/swim_workgroup/index.html