



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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General Health Advisory Following Heavy Rains

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health is reminding the public to stay out of streams, coastal, and standing waters that are contaminated by storm water (usually brown or murky in color). Storm water can contain harmful micro-organisms (pathogens) from overflowing cesspools or septic tanks as well as animal feces washed into streams and storm drains.

Excessive storm water can also contain sewage from overflowing manholes and overwhelmed treatment facilities or chemicals from polluted runoff from commercial and industrial facilities.

The Department of Health and the counties monitor water quality and spills. Warning signs will be posted at beaches and streams if contaminants from treatment facilities reach those waters, or when otherwise appropriate.

“The signs are posted to protect the public’s health, so it is very disturbing when they are vandalized or destroyed,” said Laurence Lau, Deputy Director for Environmental Health, Hawaii State Department of Health. “People should use caution if the water is brown or murky, regardless of whether warning signs are posted.”

On Oahu, sewage or chemical spills should be reported to the City and County at 523-4423.

Questions regarding the safety of standing water, “brown water” in coastal and inland areas, or beach closures should be directed to the Department of Health Clean Water Branch on Oahu at 586-4309.

For more information:
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