



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**BROWN WATER ADVISORY FOR ALL ISLANDS FOLLOWING
HEAVY RAINS**

HONOLULU -- The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) advises the public to stay out of streams and coastal waters that have turned murky or brown by storm waters. These waters and flooded areas may contain chemical pollutants or harmful micro-organisms (pathogens) from overflowing cesspools or septic tanks as well as animal feces washed into storm drains.

The DOH and affected counties will post warning signs by waters known to have been contaminated by sewage spills, but people should be careful about going into brown, murky, storm or standing water, even if no signs are present. Warning signs may not always be present, due to safety concerns for workers. Warning signs will go up when it is safe for workers to do so.

Direct contact with contaminated water may sicken or infect people, particularly if they swallow it or get it in their mouths, eyes, noses, cuts or scrapes. If people cannot avoid contact with affected waters, they should protect themselves by wearing rubber boots and gloves and other forms of protective clothing; by keeping cuts and scrapes dry and protected; by rinsing off as soon as possible; and by cleansing their skin with soap and lots of clean water.

If people become sick or infected, they should check with a healthcare provider to be evaluated for exposure to contaminated water. The public is advised to stay out of coastal waters impacted by storm water (brown water) runoff until conditions are clear.

(more)

For more information, call the DOH Hotline for current warnings and closures due to water contamination at 586-5826 or go to the DOH webpage at <http://emdweb.doh.hawaii.gov/CleanWaterBranch/CurrentWarnings/default.aspx>.

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