



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
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PRESS RELEASE

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Bathing on Western Beach

Western Beach consistently had excellent bacterial water quality prior to 2010. Since then, and especially during periods of rainfall in the winter months, there have been erratic episodes associated with sewage discharges from a storm water drain from La Linea which significantly affected the bacterial water quality at this beach. Nevertheless, it was possible to open Western Beach last summer since bathing water quality was acceptable from an EU bathing water perspective during this period.

The EU Bathing Water Directive stipulates two sets of bacterial bathing water standards known as Mandatory and Guideline values, the latter being more stringent. Bathing is allowed when either of these values is met.

This year since the 20th May, bathing water quality has again been found to meet the mandatory values consistently and the beach will be open as from the beginning of the official bathing season. A protocol to protect public health will be implemented again.

The Protocol is as follows:

- The sampling regime will be maintained at three times a week, i.e. 6 times the recommended minimum sampling period stipulated in the Bathing Water Directive.
- Visual and olfactory inspections will be carried out on a daily basis. Any pollution detected will be assessed and, if deemed necessary, the beach will be closed until such time sample results confirm that EU values are met.
- Similarly, when there is deterioration in the bacterial water quality and the Mandatory values are not met, the beach will be closed and the sampling frequency increased to daily samples. This will continue until the authorities are satisfied that bathing water quality meets EU values at which time the beach will be reopened.
- As bathing water quality may be influenced strongly by rainfall, the beach will be closed during periods of heavy rain.

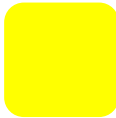
- In the above situation, the sampling frequency will be increased to daily until it is ascertained that the EU values are being met, at which time the beach will be reopened.

The bathing water quality sampling results continue to be published on the Environmental Agency website - <http://www.environmental-agency.gi/beachresult.php?beachid=6>

In addition to the publishing of the results on the web, the Government has introduced a notice board at Western Beach where the latest results of the bathing water quality programme will be displayed and updated in parallel to the Environmental Agency's Website. This notice board is prominently displayed at the official point of entry to the beach. The Bathing Water Quality will be displayed by a simple indicator based on three coloured square plates; green, yellow and red.



Bathing water quality passes Mandatory EU standards. Bathing permitted at your own risk.



Bathing water quality passes EU Mandatory standards but fails guideline values. Bathing permitted at your own risk.



Bathing water quality fails to meet EU standards. Bathing not allowed.

Routine bathing water samples are taken on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, since bacteriological analysis of bathing water requires at least 48 hours before the complete results are available. The above indicators will, under normal circumstances, illustrate the quality of the bathing water on either the preceding Monday, Wednesday or Friday of any week.