

Burlington Beach Closures 2024 FAQ

Q. Why is the beach closed?

A. Our Waterfront team manages the beaches and monitors the swim-water quality for health and safety issues. We temporarily close a beach if Cyanobacteria blooms are present in levels above state action levels, or if E. Coli tests come back higher than the EPA standard allowable level.

Q. What is Cyanobacteria?

A. Cyanobacteria, or “blue-green algae”, is naturally found in fresh water in the U.S. and in Lake Champlain and other Vermont waters. Cyanobacteria “blooms” can form when water conditions are right for growth (factors include warm air and water temps, air stillness, high phosphate levels).

As they break down, cyanobacteria can release toxins or poisons (cyanotoxins) into the water posing a hazard to human and animal health. These toxins can be particularly [harmful to pets](#), children and those with compromised immunity.

Learn what cyanobacteria blooms look like and find translated materials at healthvermont.gov/cyanobacteria.

Q. When do you check the beaches for Cyanobacteria?

A. Our team monitors the swim water at official Burlington beaches from 11am to 5pm starting on Memorial Day through Labor Day. Visual inspections taken before 11am are not valid



under state guidelines. We will update the [Swim Water Status page](#) in real time with any updates.

Q. Where do you post the beach closures?

A. You can find the latest beach open / closed status on the [Burlington Swim Water Status page](#).

We are aligning with the State of Vermont swim-water reporting system, which means we will deliver live-beach updates for Cyanobacteria bloom closures on the page linked above. Reporting will be continuous during staff hours: 11am until 5pm, daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Closures and warnings signs are posted at the beaches.

Q. What is a Category 2 Warning? Does that mean it's safe to swim?

A. Category 2 is a warning level, also used by the State of Vermont, indicating that we have detected low levels of cyanobacteria in the swim water, below the threshold for closing the beach.

We allow Category 2 water recreation as it is safe for most groups, except for the most vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups, like children and dogs who may accidentally ingest swim water, are warned to not recreate in the water at the time of a Category 2 Warning.

Our team will continue to monitor the site closely for any changes in the status. Our Waterfront team is extremely cautious when it comes to water quality and safety and will only issue a Category 2 Warning if Cyanobacteria blooms



present outside of swim areas or levels are low enough to not impact health for the majority of users.

Q. What about E. Coli?

A. E. coli is an "indicator" bacteria, while it likely does not cause sickness itself, it can reflect the presence of other sickness-causing organisms.

We test the water at all official beaches for E. coli twice per week. Beaches close when levels go above EPA VT's standard of 235 per / 100 mL. Samples are sent to certified labs and results come back in 24 hours, on **Tuesday & Friday**. If a sample at a beach area is higher than the EPA standard of 235 E. Coli per 100 milliliter sample, that area will be closed to swimming, but can remain open to other activities. Affected sites then are tested daily and reopen to swimming once results return to acceptable levels.

All beach closures due to swim-water quality issues will be posted on the Burlington Swim-Water Status page: bit.ly/BTVSwimWater



Find more information on our website:
enjoyburlington.com/resources/swim-water-status