

2026 Blue Water Task Force Bacteria Data

Enterococci bacteria are found in the guts of all warm blooded animals, and are expelled in the fecal wastes. Thus enterococci bacteria are monitored to indicate the presence of human sewage and associated pathogens, or disease causing organisms. In particular, USEPA has identified enterococci as a good indicator of increased risks of contracting gastrointestinal illnesses (i.e. vomiting and/or diarrhea) from water contact. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIHealth) requires licensed swimming beaches to monitor for enterococci bacteria on a regular basis and use a single-value enterococci standard assessing whether a beach is considered safe or not. Please see the RIHealth website for more information about the beach monitoring program (<http://www.health.ri.gov/beaches/>). The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) uses a geometric mean approach for contact recreation standards on all other waters (fresh and salt) to assess conditions.

But not all areas along the coast where people swim and surf are licensed beaches, and even at licensed beaches monitoring is only required during the typical summer beach season - usually Memorial Day through Labor Day. Since surfers are often in the water year round and in areas away from licensed beaches, the Rhode Island Chapter of Surfriders Blue Water Task Force has teamed with URI Watershed Watch to conduct monthly monitoring at fourteen popular surfing breaks along the Rhode Island shore. Check out <http://ri.surfrider.org/> to learn more about Surfriders and their activities.

Surfrider Sites - Blue Water Task Force 2026 Monitoring

RIDEM Primary Contact Recreational/Swimming Geometric Mean Density - Not to exceed 35 enterococci per 100 mL.

RIHealth standards at licenced beaches: Not to exceed 60 enterococci per 100 mL

Monitoring Location	1/23 -24 & 1/29	2/22, 3/3 - 3/6	3/22 & 3/23	4/13 & 4/15	5/9	6/6	7/11	8/8	9/12	10/24	11/22 & 11/23	12/21 & 12/22	Geomean
Watch Hill	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Misquamacut Surf Area	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Fenway Beach	10	<10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Mary's Beach	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Deep Hole	<10	10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
The K's	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Conant Ave.	<10	<10	146	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Scarborough Beach South	<10	<10	31	<10	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Monahan's Dock	<10	<10	148	<10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Narragansett Pier Beach Steps	<10	10	<10	<10	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Bonnet Point	<10	<10	<10	<10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Potowomut @ Rocky Hill	-	10	<10	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
First Beach	<10	<10	<10	146	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10
Second Beach	<10	<10	10	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<10

Any result above the state standard is considered unsafe, and swimmers should refrain from swimming until results return to acceptable levels, or at least for several days after heavy rain.

See <http://ri.surfrider.org/> to learn about RI Chapter of Surfrider Foundation activities



In honor of the Blizzard of '26 -
Surfing the K's requires some
effort when the snow is deep
(Image from
<https://www.stormrider.surf/country/rhode-island-usa>)