



National Beach Guidance and Required Performance Criteria for Grants

Summary

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is publishing National Beach Guidance and Required Performance Criteria for Grants. This document contains the performance criteria that a state beach program must meet to receive a BEACH Act Implementation Grant. BEACH Act Implementation Grants provide financial assistance to help states operate beach water quality monitoring programs, including notifying the public when there are health hazards.



Background

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) was signed into law on October 10, 2000, to reduce the risk of disease to users of the Nation's recreational waters. The BEACH Act authorizes EPA to award grants to eligible coastal and Great Lake states and tribes for the development and implementation of programs to monitor coastal recreational waters for disease-causing microorganisms and to notify the public when monitoring indicates a public health hazard. EPA made funds available in fiscal years 2001 and 2002 to help states develop their programs. To be eligible for the implementation grants, states must establish and operate monitoring and notification programs that are consistent with performance criteria provided in this guidance document.

How Did EPA Draft the Guidance Document?

EPA developed the performance criteria based, in part, on a series of consultations with representatives of state water pollution, coastal protection and public health agencies and other interested parties. We noticed the draft of this document for public comment in the Federal Register on July 31, 2001. To help the public review the draft guidance document and prepare comments, EPA and the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators and the Coastal States Organization hosted five public forums on the draft. After the comment period closed on October 31, 2001, we revised the final document based on comments.

Who Will Use the Guidance Document?

We created the guidance to help coastal and Great Lake state grant candidates implement effective programs for monitoring and assessing coastal recreational waters and to promote consistent programs across the country. Therefore, we expect that local health departments, water quality managers, beach managers, and other local, state, and tribal agencies will also use the guidance to improve their recreational water quality monitoring and public notification programs.

What Are the Major Components of the Guidance Document?

The document contains five chapters and accompanying appendices which contain both guidance and grant performance criteria. Chapter 1 describes the legislation and summarizes the human health concerns related to microbial contamination of recreational waters. Chapter 2 outlines the performance criteria. Chapter 3 introduces the risk-based beach evaluation and classification process for prioritizing waters for monitoring. Chapter 4 gives the methodology for monitoring and assessing recreational waters, and Chapter 5 explains risk communication and the process of public notification for health hazards due to bacterial contamination.

How Can I Get a Copy of the Guidance Document?

You can get a copy of the guidance document from EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/> or by contacting the Office of Water Resources Center at 202-260-7786 (e-mail: center.water-resource@epa.gov); mailing address: Office of Water Resources Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, RC-4100, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460. Please request the *National Beach Guidance and Grant Performance Criteria for Recreational Waters* (EPA-823-B-02-004).

For More Information

You can find more information on the draft Guidance document at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches> on the Internet or call Charles Kovatch at 202-566-0399 or send him an email at kovatch.charles@epa.gov.