



# Town of Darien

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## Health Department

### **Ensuring Safe Water Quality at Town Beaches**

The Darien Health Department is responsible for collecting bathing beach water samples, monitoring rainfall events, maintaining a 24-hour HOTLINE (203-656-7323) with the beach status and notifying the Darien Parks and Recreation Department when it becomes necessary to restrict the public from swimming at Darien public beaches (Pear Tree Point and Weed Beaches). Water samples are taken by health department representatives at least once a week between Memorial Day and Labor Day and submitted to a state certified laboratory for analysis to ensure safe water quality.

**The Health Department will take immediate action (within one hour) to “close” the beach(s) to swimming by verbal and/or email notification to the Darien Parks and Recreation Department (and adjust the HOTLINE message) when any of the following conditions occur:**

- One inch or greater of rainfall occurs during a rainfall event as determined by the Darien Health Department referring to rain gages maintained in Stamford and Norwalk. Rainfall shall be measured for a 24-hour period, but continuous rain for a period of greater than 24 hours will be accumulated and considered as one rain event as per the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- Bathing water bacterial sample results from each sampling station are found to be elevated above acceptable levels for swimming/bathing for two consecutive sampling days.
- A pollution event has occurred, including but not limited to releases of sewage, oil or other chemicals, or a toxic algal bloom that may pose an unacceptable risk to public health after consultation with the CT State of Public Health.

**The Darien Health Department will notify the Darien Parks and Recreation Department that it is acceptable to “open” the bathing area(s) when any of the following conditions occur:**

- ◆ More than 24 hours has passed since the end of the most recent rainfall **event** of greater than or equal to one (1.0) inch. *No calls from the Health Department are required when reopening after a rainfall event only. This determination may be made independently by the Parks and Recreation Department.*
- ◆ Water sample results after subsequent retesting are within the acceptable criteria for reopening as determined by the Health Department.
- ◆ Sufficient time has passed after a pollution event (not limited to sewage, oil, chemical or toxic phytoplankton) as determined by the Health Department together with the CT State of Public Health, that any risk to public health has been minimized.

### **Responsibilities of the Darien Health Department:**

1. Monitor all rainfall event amounts.
2. Collect bathing water samples and assess results from two sampling stations at Weed Beach, three sampling stations at Pear Tree Point Beach.
3. Contact the Darien Parks and Recreation Department within one hour whenever the status of the bathing area(s) must be changed, and follow-up with email notice.
4. Update the 24-hour phone HOTLINE recording at 203-656-7323 as necessary.
5. Notify the media and nearby Health Departments as necessary for unusual events requiring closure.

### **Responsibilities of the Darien Parks and Recreation Department:**

1. Close the beaches to swimming upon notification from the Darien Health Department. Closure includes changing the signs and notification to the Lifeguards.
2. Reopen the beaches for swimming as soon as possible, automatically 24-hours after a rainfall event of greater than 1.0” ends, and/or when notified by the Health Department. Reopening includes changing the signs at the beaches and notification to the lifeguards.

### **Responsibilities of the Darien Department of Public Works:**

Immediately notify the Darien Health Department of the occurrence of a release of sewage, oil, or other chemicals and follow-up with a copy of the written report or email that is sent to the CTDEEP as soon as possible.

The information will be assessed by the Health Department and a determination may be made to “close” the bathing area(s) after consultation with the State Department of Public.

**Are Beaches open for Swimming Today?**

**Find out by calling the 24-hour Beach HOTLINE at:**

**203-656-7323**