

# Town Health Officer Training



*Guidance • Support • Prevention • Protection*

Environmental Health 2009

## **Town Health Officers**

Great deal of authority and responsibility to investigate and mitigate public health threats

Program lost funding in 2007

- Coordinator position eliminated
- Trainings, technical support, workshops, etc reduced

## **Duties**

- Investigate possible public health hazards and risks within the municipality
- Prevent, remove or destroy any such hazards and to mitigate significant public health risks
- Take steps necessary to enforce orders issued

**18 VSA § 602**

## Goal of Trainings

*Provide town health officers with the knowledge and support enabling them to better enforce laws and regulations that protect the health and ensure the safety of their community*

## **Resources**

Vermont Department of Health  
Environmental Health Section

Weekdays - 7:45 am – 4:30 pm

**1-800-439-8550**

After-hours, weekends & holidays

**1-800-640-4374 (duty officer)**

## THO Listserve

- Email [mstrong@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:mstrong@vdh.state.vt.us)
  - Write "subscribe to THO listserv" in the subject
  - Provide first & last name

# Updated Manual

- Available at:

<http://healthvermont.gov/local/tho/tho.aspx>

- Paper copies will be mailed in the near future



## Upcoming Trainings

- Blue Green Algae
- Septic Systems
- Rodent & Pest control
- Rental Housing Code
- Housing Inspection
- Writing a Health Order
- Flu Response
- Childhood Lead Prevention
- Lead & Asbestos Regulation
- Indoor Air/Mold
- Radon
- Drinking water
- Fire Safety
- Additional training will be identified

# Swimming Area E.Coli Monitoring in Vermont



Photo by  
Nigel Kent

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## **Why Test Swimming Waters?**

- **To prevent members of the public from getting sick**

## **Where Does Swimming Water Contamination Come From?**

- **Heavy rain**
- **Broken sewage pipes**
- **Failed septic systems**
- **Farm runoff**
- **Diapers**
- **Pets**
- **Wild animals**

## What Are Water Samples Tested For?

- *Escherichia coli*, commonly known as *E. coli*
- *E. coli* is a bacterium commonly found in the intestine of warm-blooded animals
- Detection of *E. coli* suggests the presence of other disease causing microorganisms

## **When Should Swimming Water Be Tested?**

- **Testing is recommended at least once a week between Memorial Day and Labor Day**
- **Test more frequently after floods or periods of heavy rain**

## **Test Results $\leq 77$ E. coli / 100 ml**

- **Suitable for swimming**
- **Consider testing again next week**

## **Test Results $> 77$ E. coli / 100 ml**

- **Not suitable for swimming**
- **Recommend immediate posting and closure of swimming area**
- **Retest**
  - **Take follow-up sample from same location**
  - **Keep closed until result  $\leq 77$**

# Beach Closed Poster

- Beach Closure signs obtained by

1-800-439-8550

or

<http://healthvermont.gov>



**ATTENTION**  
**SWIMMING AREA CLOSED**

 

as of \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ **Town** \_\_\_\_\_ local health officer has determined that swimming in this area presents a public health risk because of water contaminated by \_\_\_\_\_ **E.coli** \_\_\_\_\_.

It will be retested on \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

For more information contact:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your contact info.** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Town Health Officer



VERMONT  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
healthvermont.gov

## Citizen Group Testing

- Environmental groups and students also test ponds, rivers and lakes
- If brought to your attention and  $> 77$  *E. coli* / 100 ml, retest or consider voluntary posting

## **Who Else Tests Recreational Waters in Vermont?**

- **Army Corps of Engineers**
  - Federal swimming areas
  
- **State Parks Division**
  - State park swimming areas

## **Obtaining a Water Test Kit from the VDH Lab**

- **Call 1-800-660-9997, press 1 then 7560**
- **Type B, Recreational Water**
- **\$15**
- **Obtain in advance**

## Recreational Water Kit, Type B

- **Kit contains**
  - **One 100 ml sterile bottle**  
*with sodium thiosulfate*
  - **Water Collection Information Form**
  - **Cardboard Outer Container w/ Mailing Label**
  
- **Store at room temperature**
  
- **Note Expiration Date**

## **Sampling Guidelines**

- **Water samples should be taken at times and locations of greatest swimmer use**
- **After heavy rain events**
- **Sample early in the week to leave time for follow-up samples before the weekend**

## How to Collect a Water Sample

- Collect samples in water that is  $\geq 2$  feet deep

- Knee to waist deep
- Be Careful!

- Do not touch the mouth of the bottle

- Do not rinse the bottle



Proper sampling depth

## **How to Collect a Water Sample**

- **Hold bottle at 45° angle**
- **Plunge the bottle to a depth of 6-12”**
- **Fill bottle above the 100 ml line**
- **Replace screw cap**
- **Fill out water collection form**

# State Laboratory Water Collection Form

		<b>VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LABORATORY</b> Division of Health Surveillance 195 COLCHESTER AVENUE BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05402-1125 863-7335 800-660-9997			LAB NO. _____
		<b>WATER SAMPLE COLLECTION INFORMATION</b>			LITS NO. _____
REPORT TO BE SENT TO:					DATE RECEIVED: _____
<b>Name &amp; Mailing Address</b>					
DATE OF COLLECTION	HOUR AND MINUTE OF COLLECTION	SAMPLE TAKEN IN TOWN OF	NAME OF PERSON TAKING SAMPLE	DAY PHONE NO. (INCLUDE AREA CODE)	
<b>Date</b> MO. DAY YR.	<b>Time</b> AM PM ALSO CIRCLE AM OR PM	<b>Town</b>	<b>Your name</b>	<b>Your phone #</b>	
SUBMITTERS REMARKS		LABORATORY REMARKS			
<b>Any Remarks</b>					
<b>NOTE: ONLY ORIGINAL WATER SAMPLE COLLECTION INFORMATION FORM CAN BE SUBMITTED WITH SAMPLE. INCOMPLETE INFORMATION ON THIS REQUEST FORM MAY RESULT IN THE EXAMINATION BEING DELAYED OR THE SPECIMEN BEING REJECTED.</b>					
<b>SECTION BELOW FOR REGULATED PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM USE ONLY</b>					

## **Delivering a Water Sample**

- **Deliver or mail to the laboratory ASAP**
  - **If you mail the sample, use either first class or overnight delivery**
  - **Lab testing must begin within 30 hours of sample collection**
  - **Must be received by 4:00 pm for testing to begin the same day**

## **Concluding Remarks**

- **Have test kits and posters available**
- **Test at least weekly, more if heavy rain**
- **Consider repeat testing or just closing if other groups report levels > 77 E. coli / 100 ml**
- **Get owner's permission on private property**
- **Report all closings to the Health Dept**
  - **1-800-439-8550**

**Questions?**

**1-800-439-8550**