

# PUGET SOUND VITAL SIGNS

## INDICATOR CONDITION OF SWIMMING BEACHES

The "condition of swimming beaches" indicator reflects marine water quality conditions in areas heavily used for recreation. This indicator tracks the percent of swimming beaches that pass swimming standards with no more than one exceedance event of the swimming standard during the summer. Swimming beaches not meeting water quality standards indicate increased risk of people getting sick through gastrointestinal illnesses, respiratory illnesses, and skin infections.

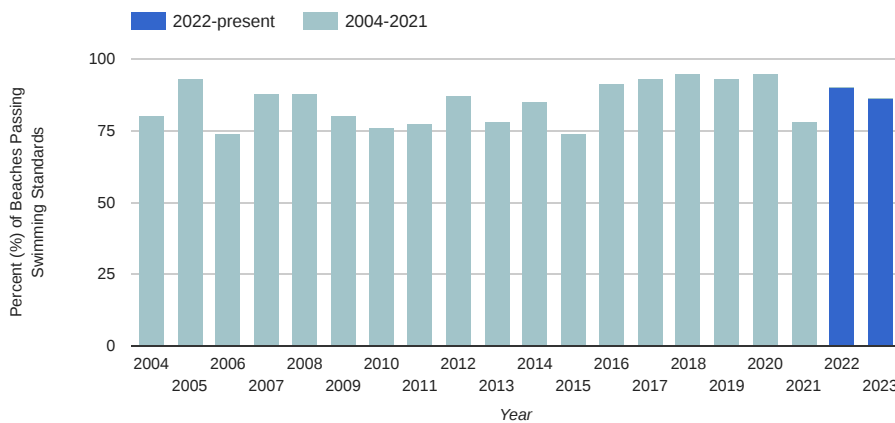
Indicator  
Progress

Target  
Status



### Condition of swimming beaches

By: Core Puget Sound Beaches



The percent of Puget Sound core beaches that have no more than one exceedance of the swimming standard during the summer. Core beaches are a prioritized subset of all monitored beaches sampled every year. The method for calculating an exceedance of the swimming standard changed in 2022. Beginning in 2022, an exceedance is now recorded over a 7-day period and is called an *exceedance event*. Results from the new method are marked differently from earlier years.

### Target

Beginning in 2022, 95% of core beaches meet safe swimming standards annually.

[Target fact sheet](#)

[Memo to Science Panel with rationale](#)

### Data Source

Washington State Department of Ecology [BEACH Program](#) and [BEACH Annual Report](#)

### Indicator Lead

Heather Gibbs  
[hgib461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:hgib461@ecy.wa.gov)  
Washington State Department of Ecology

### Last Updated

01/30/2024

## Key Vital Sign Indicator Results

- 86% of Puget Sound core beaches monitored during the 2023 swim season met the recreational water quality standard.
- Six core beaches had two or more exceedance events of the swimming standard in 2023. Those beaches include: Freeland County Park (Island County), Jack Hyde Park (Pierce County), Indianola Dock, Fay Bainbridge Park, Pomeroy Park, and Silverdale Waterfront Park (Kitsap County). Additionally, there were two non-core beaches that failed during the 2023 sampling season: Little Squalicum Park (Whatcom County), and Joel Pritchard (Kitsap County).
- Since 2004, soon after the BEACH program started, many local bacteria problems have been identified and corrected through local pollution identification work. There are still year-to-year fluctuations in marine water quality at swimming beaches due to different factors, but many beaches are experiencing water quality improvements and the work to identify problems continues.

## CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VITAL SIGNS VISIT: [vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov](https://vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov) OR CONTACT: [vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov](mailto:vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov)