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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Kassam, Nick" <Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca>
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Date: 6/13/2019 6:27:31 PM

Subject: Memo - New VCH Webpage – Beach Water Quality Reports

Attachments: Memo to Council_VCH Online Data Reporting Changes.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

The enclosed memo from Nick Kassam, General Manager of Real Estate and Facilities Manager, advises of recent changes made by Vancouver Coastal Health to their online webpage that reports beach water quality. In summary ☐

- ☐ VCH has updated the webpage to provide an interactive map that provides beach status information with links to sampling data. With the recent changes, sampling data provided now includes both single sample data in addition to the 30 day geometric mean information that was provided previously.
- ☐ There can be high variability in single sample data. As such, potential exists for heightened perception of worsened water quality. There is also the potential for confusion about the use of the different guidelines which pertain to single sample and the 30 day geometric mean results, and how respective exceedances affect VCH's decisions on beach status. Whereas a 30 day geometric mean exceedance is generally representative of an overall trend, this is not necessarily the case with a single sample exceedance. When a single sample exceedance occurs, the response by VCH is generally to take a re-sample.
- ☐ Staff are working to develop clear internal communications and are working with VCH to coordinate messaging and confirm lead agency responses to anticipated inquiries. Inquiries pertaining to beach water quality results and other information provided on the VCH webpage can be directed VCH via the email: environmental.health@vch.ca.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nick Kassam at 604.871.6859 or Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

June 13, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager, Engineering Services
Lisa Prescott, Director, Strategic Operations Planning & Program Management
Sabrina Scalena, Communications Manager
Margot Davis, Manager, Environmental Services

FROM: Nick Kassam
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT: New VCH Webpage – Beach Water Quality Reports





The purpose of this memo is to apprise Council of recent changes made to Vancouver Coastal Health's (VCH) online data reporting [webpage](#). This memo outlines the key updates, provides an overview of potential considerations and advises Council on where inquiries pertaining to the new webpage can be directed. The Park Board has also received a memo advising of VCH's online changes.


Webpage Updates

Key updates to the webpage are as follows:

- the incorporation of an interactive map that provides beach status information using descriptive icons and links to sampling data;
- the inclusion of single sample data in addition to the 30-day geometric mean data that was provided previously; and,
- an enhanced FAQ section that provides more comprehensive information about recreational beach water quality assessment and determinations on beach closures.

For beaches within Vancouver, there are four potential options denoting status as noted in the following table.

Icon	Designation	VCH Assessment
	Open for swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> within guidelines
	Swim at own risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> last sample over limit, resampling underway
	Not suitable for swimming – advisory in effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of E.coli bacteria is above recommended guidelines
	No swimming – beach closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hazards such as red tide, algal blooms or chemical spills are present

There are also a number of sites along Vancouver’s waterfront denoted as reference sites  which are not designated beaches. These include sites within False Creek. The water quality is monitored as the water may be used for secondary contact recreation and data provided for information purposes only.

Considerations

As noted, the updated webpage now includes both the 30 day geometric mean data as well as individual sample information. A benefit of this is that the most up-to-date beach sampling information will be available to the public. However, there may also be heightened concern and perception of worsened water quality given the variability that exists among individual water quality samples. There is also the potential for confusion about the application of the different guidelines that apply to single sample and 30 day geometric mean data and VCH responses to exceedances. Whereas a 30 day geometric mean exceedance is generally representative of an overall trend, a single sample exceedance can solely represent a singular occurrence that is not representative of overall water quality conditions. In the case of a single sample exceedance, the response is generally to take a re-sample.

As outlined in the attached memo to Parks Board, Park Board and City staff are working to proactively address potential implications. Efforts have included reviewing and providing input to VCH on the new webpage. Staff are also working with VCH and Metro Vancouver (who conduct the sampling) to coordinate messaging and confirm lead responses to anticipated inquiries.

Should Council receive any questions pertaining to VCH’s online webpage, these can be directed to VCH at environmental.health@vch.ca. If Council has any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Nick Kassam
 General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

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