

NEWS RELEASE

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Here's the scoop on poop at Departure Bay

The City of Nanaimo takes weekly water samples at Departure Bay to ensure safety

Summary

Each week in May through September, the City of Nanaimo monitors the water quality at Departure Bay by taking 26 water samples from locations and streams around the bay, testing for fecal coliforms.

To keep the bay water clean and the beach open, the City of Nanaimo does have a bylaw in place. The bylaw states that no dogs are to be on the beach or in the water between the beginning of May and the end of September each year. This bylaw is in place for all of Nanaimo's lakes, streams, and waterfront swimming spots, except for those designated as off-leash areas.

The bay already has nature's geese, gulls, seals and ducks contributing fecal matter daily, and if pets add to the problem, it could elevate the levels of fecal coliforms to a point that exceeds the Canadian Federal Health Guidelines, and forces a beach closure.

Strategic Link: The City of Nanaimo's water quality initiatives support the City's commitment to public safety, health, and quality of life.

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo's Public Works Wastewater Department monitors coliform levels in Departure Bay to ensure that the beach can remain open during peak season, May 1 - September 30 each year.
- Animal Faeces that wash into Departure Bay, or even that enter into a contributing creek, drainage ditch, or storm sewer system can potentially raise coliform and E.coli levels in the water, and may cause a beach closure.
- Weekly testing is underway, and 26 samples are taken from Departure Bay, and the surrounding and contributing water ways each week, to ensure Coliform levels remain within Canadian Federal Health guidelines.

Quotes

"Do not dispose of faeces, paint, drywall, or oils into ditches or catch basins, as these pollutants end up in our Oceans and Streams, which ultimately could have a beach area closed for all recreational activity. We all can do our part to help the Environment."

Wayne Roulston
Drainage Foreman
City of Nanaimo, Public Works

"The City of Nanaimo Drainage Department takes water quality testing at Departure Bay and surrounding tributaries very seriously. With regular monitoring, this ensures protection to all aquatic life, wildlife and water activities."

Wayne Roulston
Drainage Foreman
City of Nanaimo, Public Works

Quick Facts

- City of Nanaimo Bylaw 7073, section 3.3(C) states that no person shall permit any animal under their ownership or custody to be on a public beach during the months of May through September inclusive.
- The City of Nanaimo would like to remind dog owners to be responsible in parks and on trails, and that fines are in place, ranging from \$50 - \$500, for not following dog-related bylaw rules.
- The following parks have designated off-leash areas: May Richards Bennett Pioneer, Beaufort, Westwood Lake, Invermere Beach, Northfield, Wardropper, Colliery Dam, St. George Ravine, Gallow's Point (Protection Island), Cable Bay Trail, Beban and Diver Lake (October - April).
- In 1994 Departure Bay beach was closed to swimmers due to elevated levels of fecal coliforms and Escherichia coli (E. coli) in the water. There was too much bacteria in the water for it to be considered safe to swim in.

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