

Water contamination scenario (with inlet stream)

A routine bathing water sample was taken at a beach at 10am, Monday morning.

Results back on Tuesday are; E coli 215, I.E. 80. Beach is 2kms from a secondary sewage treatment plant operated by the local authority. Beach also has a stream inlet discharging onto it.

A phone call is received at 9.30am on Wednesday morning from the local authority informing of a sewage discharge due to a pump malfunction that happened at 6pm on the previous Sunday. They had expected to get it fixed by Monday lunchtime, but a new part was not available. As a result, there has been an ongoing discharge of untreated sewage since Sunday 6pm.

Nominate a scribe to represent the group and complete this sheet. Nominate someone who will provide feedback if requested during the feedback session

Using the national guidance (in particular the appendices), outline in bullet points the initial environmental and public health approach that should be taken to managing this scenario

What do you do on Wednesday morning?

Learning ;

- **LA should have contacted the HSE sooner as per Guide (Pre- season liaison with LA's will facilitate better communication).**
- **EH contact LA to request them to carry out an assessment as to the potential risk of contamination of the quality of the bathing water.**
- **Public Health to be contacted to inform them, and to ascertain if any illness reported**
- **HSE should recommend re-sampling as per Guide. You have a satisfactory result from sample taken a few hours after discharge started, but that does not mean that the discharge has or could influence the bathing area, so resample now needed. A visual inspection of the beach, for any evidence of contamination shall also be carried out by EH.**

In the meantime with resample results pending an Advisory Notice maybe recommended by the HSE depending on the LA response above to the bathing water contamination risk analysis request for the beach.

New information to participants

A resample was taken by EH on Wednesday at 11am.

The sampling officer (who is a new member of staff) notes that there is no signage at the inlet stream.

At 3pm on Wednesday, faecal matter is noticed in bathing area by a member of the public, who rang the local authority. Local authority contacts EH looking for advice.

No illness reported from public health

What do you do on Wednesday evening?

Learning ;

Public Health to be contacted to inform them

Prohibition Notice to be issued, not enough to wait until the following day to see if sample taken earlier that day is satisfactory or not.

It may not be necessary for the local authority to provide a sign at the stream inlet if they have previously carried out a risk assessment and sampling programme that determines the inlet stream is free from contamination or mitigation measures have been taken – if not, a sign needs to be provided as soon as possible, or reinstated as it may have become damaged with tidal movements.

New information to participants

On Thursday morning the lab result from the sample taken on Wednesday morning is E coli 2205, I.E. 550.

What Action do you now take ?

Learning ;

Prohibition notice stays in place until Criteria for lifting an Prohibition notice as per Section 4.5(B) is met (and the wastewater plant is fully functioning again)

