

SEPA and safety at Scottish bathing waters

September 2021



Introduction

The **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** monitors Scotland's 85 designated bathing waters from June till mid-September, where we monitor water quality as specified in the bathing water regulations. On our website, we provide:

- annual water quality classifications for each bathing water;
- results from samples taken throughout the current season;
- daily predictions for 28 bathing waters throughout the season.

Our work allows bathing water users decide how, or if, to use a bathing water for fun or leisure.

Questions

Q. What information does SEPA provide on the quality of bathing waters?

A. During the season, we post results online at [Bathing Waters: Homepage \(sepa.org.uk\)](https://www.sepa.org.uk/bathing-waters) from our sampling of 85 bathing waters.

Q. Is the water quality safe for swimming at a designated bathing water?

A. From June to mid-September, we post daily water quality forecasts on our website and on electronic beach signage at about 30 bathing waters to allow bathing water users to make informed decisions.

Q. When is the water quality unsafe for swimming?

A. The health of water users can be at risk at most locations one to three days after heavy rain. Excess water can run off from road drains and paved areas, combining with untreated but diluted sewage from outfalls and runoff from livestock farming, into bathing waters.

Q. Where is most at risk from excess water after rainfall?

A. Risks tend to be higher in urban areas or where there is extensive livestock farming as these are the key sources of bacteria to bathing waters.

Q. Do you monitor all Scottish bathing waters?

A. We don't monitor bathing water quality at other coastal or inland areas. Full details of our work are available at sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters

Q. Where can I find more information on keeping safe while using a bathing water?

A. The RNLI are experts on sea safety. Whether you're heading to the beach, to the coast, or out to sea, they've collected essential safety advice so you can make the most of your time on the water [Water Safety Advice And Tips - Know The Risks \(rnli.org\)](https://www.rnli.org/sea-safety-advice)

Water Safety Scotland also provides information on Staying safe in and around Scotland's waters [Information \(watersafetyscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk)

Look out for local signage/hazard warnings at bathing waters you visit, there may be restrictions in place of advice to follow posted on them.

Further information

SEPA website: www.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language please either contact SEPA by telephone on 03000 99 66 99 or by email to equalities@sepa.org.uk

If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling you to communicate with us using sign language.

<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

Strathallan House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TZ