

## What is Kitsap Public Health District's role in responding to sewage spills?

- **As a public health agency, our role is to notify community members of potential health risks** caused by sewage spills, so they can take steps to protect their health. Kitsap Public Health is not required to issue sewage advisories. Not all Washington jurisdictions choose to alert the public to sewage spills. We issue sewage spill advisories because we believe Kitsap residents should be aware when there is potentially harmful fecal pollution in our waterways.
- **Kitsap Public Health does not operate wastewater (sewage) utilities.** These systems are operated and maintained by local wastewater purveyors.
- **Kitsap Public Health does not regulate wastewater (sewage) utilities,** meaning we do not issue permits for systems, inspect systems, or have authority to take enforcement action. The state Department of Ecology regulates wastewater systems.
- **Kitsap Public Health does regulate onsite sewage (septic) systems in Kitsap.** Learn more about septic system regulations at [kitsappublichealth.org/environment/septic\\_systems.php](https://kitsappublichealth.org/environment/septic_systems.php).

## How are sewage spills reported?

- When a spill is identified, **the wastewater purveyor, such as a local city or county public works department, notifies Kitsap Public Health.** Notification can occur 24 hours a day.
- **Kitsap Public Health gathers information on the spill,** including volume, effluent type, duration, location, impacted areas, and more.
- Depending on the spill location, **we consult with the state Department of Health Shellfish Program to determine the expected impact from the spill** (based on models the program has for marine waters).
- **We issue advisories if needed to protect public health.** (We typically issue a 7-day no-contact advisory. The state Department of Health may also issue a 21-day shellfish harvesting advisory).
- **We notify the public** via signs at public access points, email and text notifications, website updates, and posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In addition, advisories are often reported in local news media and shared by other government agencies and organizations.



Sign up to receive public health advisories by email or text:

[kitsappublichealth.org/subscribe](https://kitsappublichealth.org/subscribe)

Check for current water contact advisories:

[kitsappublichealth.org/beaches](https://kitsappublichealth.org/beaches)