



# PRESS RELEASE

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## County Health Officer on Local Oil Spill - Health Advisory #2

(Santa Ana, CA) – According to the latest [update](#) from the Unified Command leading the oil spill response along the Orange County coastline, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA), and a contracted environmental consulting firm, are conducting community air monitoring through mobile air surveys and air sampling at 12 sites located along the Orange County coastline.

As of Thursday, air samples from areas potentially impacted by the oil spill are within background levels (air quality on a typical day) and below California health standards for the pollutants measured. Air monitoring efforts will continue under the Unified Command.

“We are very encouraged by the early results of the air quality sampling,” says **Dr. Clayton Chau**, County Health Officer and HCA Director. “As the oil response teams continue to monitor, inspect, and clean the beaches to ensure that appropriate cleanup actions are taken, and in advance of water analysis from the Unified Command, our original health advisory continues to remain in place. We ask that our residents and visitors continue to avoid the ocean water and oiled areas of our beaches to limit the risk of contaminants being absorbed through the skin, inhalation, and ingestion until further notice. This means refraining from recreational activities on the coastline such as swimming, surfing, biking, walking, exercising, fishing and gathering.”

Even if you do not see an oil sheen in the water, dispersed and dissolved oil contaminants may exist. Volatile components from the spilled oil may evaporate into the air, allowing contaminants to be inhaled. Consuming contaminated fish or seafood may allow contaminants to be ingested into your body and cause illness.

Symptoms of exposure to the spilled oil or dispersants may include irritation of the skin, eye, nose, and throat; headache; dizziness; nausea; upset stomach; vomiting; cough or shortness of breath. Dr. Chau advises that if you experience any symptoms that result from coming into contact with or inhaling oil contaminants or vapors, seek medical attention by contacting your local primary care provider, or going to a local urgent care center. If you are experiencing serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911.

In response to the coastal oil spill, access to some beach areas may be limited or closed; information is being posted to local city websites. Additionally, the HCA’s Environmental Health Division has issued a Rain Advisory for Orange County as bacterial levels can rise significantly in ocean and bay waters adjacent to storm drains, creeks and rivers during and after rainstorms. The elevated levels of bacteria can continue for a period of at least 3 days depending upon the intensity of the rain and the volume of the runoff. Residents and visitors should avoid coastal waters impacted by discharging storm drains, creeks, and rivers, and avoid contact with any runoff on the beach during dry or wet weather conditions. Visit [ocbeachinfo.com](http://ocbeachinfo.com) for an update on the Rain Advisory.

Contact information about the Unified Command’s response to the oil spill as well as information for volunteering, donating, or submitting inquiries can be found at [socialspillresponse.com](http://socialspillresponse.com). If anyone encounters oiled wildlife, please avoid contact and call the **Oiled Wildlife Care Network** at (877) 823-6926.

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