

DPNR Advises Against Coastal Water Use, Urges Erosion Control and Property Securing

Precautionary measures in place due to heavy rain forecasts and potential flooding; residents, contractors, and homeowners urged to take immediate action to mitigate health and safety risks

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The V.I. Dept. of Planning and Natural Resources has issued a public advisory urging residents to refrain from using the coastal waters throughout the territory due to forecasts of heavy rain and potential flooding. This precautionary measure is in place until further notice.

DPNR also strongly advises parents to instruct their children to avoid storm water-impacted beaches, areas with manholes, and regions prone to storm water flooding. There is an elevated health risk associated with swimming in these areas due to increased concentrations of bacteria that can pose serious health hazards.

Storm water runoff may contain contaminants or pollutants harmful to human health. Therefore, it is essential to avoid areas of storm water runoff, such as guts, puddles, and drainage basins. DPNR will continue to monitor the affected areas and provide updates as necessary.

Furthermore, DPNR urges all contractors, developers, and home builders to immediately implement additional erosion and sediment control practices at all construction sites. This includes areas where property is cleared, graded, filled, or otherwise disturbed.

The department recommends the following erosion and sediment control measures:

- Preservation of natural vegetation
- Drainage swales and diversions
- Temporary and permanent seeding
- Soil sealers and binders
- Erosion control mats
- Soil retaining walls
- Construction entrances and exits
- Silt fencing
- Sediment traps
- Mulches, mats, and geotextiles

It is also advised that all construction materials and equipment be removed from sites or properly secured to prevent them from becoming airborne objects that could cause damage.

Residents are encouraged to take this opportunity to visually inspect areas that may need additional erosion and sediment control measures. To report any areas of concern, contact the Division of Environmental Protection Earth Change Program at 774-3320 or 773-1082.

DPNR said it will continue to monitor the situation and provide further updates as necessary.