



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: March 15, 2006

06-18

STORM WATER ADVISORY FOR ALL ISLANDS FOLLOWING HEAVY RAINS

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) advises the public to stay out of streams and coastal waters (usually murky or brown) that have received storm water and to stay out of flooded lands and standing water. These waters and flooded areas may contain chemical pollutants or harmful micro-organisms (pathogens) from overflowing cesspools or septic tanks as well as animal feces washed into streams and storm drains.

The DOH and the counties will post warning signs by waters known to have been contaminated by sewage spills and certain other water pollution, but people should be careful about going in the waters even if no signs are present.

Direct contact with contaminated water may sicken or infect people, particularly if they swallow it or get it in their mouths, eyes, noses, cuts or scrapes. If people cannot avoid contact, they should protect themselves by wearing rubber boots or shoes, gloves and clothing; keeping cuts and scrapes dry and protected; rinsing off as soon as possible; and cleaning their skin with soap and lots of clean water. If people become sick or infected, they should check with a health care provider for evaluation and tell him or her about the exposure to contaminated water.

In sewage spill and storm water events, the DOH seeks to have warnings and advice issued first and does not wait for bacteria testing. The simplest precautions are to avoid contact with murky, brown, flood, storm, or standing water and clean up well if you cannot avoid it.

For information on current water warnings on each island, log on to the DOH homepage at www.hawaii.gov/health and click on Contaminated Water Postings.

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For information, contact:
Kurt Tsue
Communications Office
Phone: (808) 586-4402