

Harmful Algal Bloom and Water Closure Information

A quick reference guide from the destination marketing organization for Coastal Mississippi

More information can be found here: <https://www.gulfcoast.org/partners/harmful-algal-bloom>

Why are Coastal Mississippi waters closed along the beachfront?

Coastal Mississippi is experiencing a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) due to the extended opening of the Bonnet Carré Spillway. Popularly known as blue-green algae, HAB can cause rashes, diarrhea and vomiting. It is spreading as water from the Mississippi River pours into the Gulf of Mexico. As the region is situated along the Gulf of Mexico, these natural occurrences do take place, and other coastal destinations have experienced similar conditions.

What to say when a guest asks about what to do outside of the affected waters:

- At this time, you can still enjoy most fresh water and salt water opportunities that extend beyond the affected areas in the region, including kayaking, paddle boarding, excursions to barrier islands and fishing experiences. Although some portions of the Mississippi Sound are closed, you can still spend time on our 26 miles of man-made beaches.
- It is safe to consume seafood purchased in restaurants and from seafood dealers. Seafood products are monitored and tested regularly.
- Recommend that guests explore: award-winning attractions, incredible golfing, shopping in each coastal community, unique tours and sightseeing opportunities, music and headlining entertainment, breweries, non-stop gaming, fishing experiences, mouth-watering restaurants and much more!
- Water-based activities that are still open include:
 - Ship Island and private excursions to other barrier islands
 - Sunset and dolphin cruises available by private charter or through the Betsy Ann Riverboat, Ship Island Excursions, and Biloxi Schooners
 - Fishing excursions (all based outside of the affected areas)
 - Experience the thrill and exhilaration of parasailing near Deer Island with Parasail Adventures (participants will be sailing over the water but will not touch the water)
 - Paddle boarding and kayaking most fresh water, bays, bayous, and salt water beyond the affected areas
 - Observe local wildlife on eco tours including Betsy Ann Riverboat, Biloxi Shrimping Trip, Eco-Tours of South Mississippi, Fisher-Man Guide Services, Grand Bay NERR, Gulf Coast Gator Ranch & Airboat Tours, Gulf Islands National Seashore, McCoy's River and Marsh Tours, Whipasnapa Charters and Wolf River Canoe & Kayak
 - Relax on the sand and enjoy sand-based activities
- Additional itinerary ideas can be found at <https://www.gulfcoast.org/weather-beach-updates/>.
- Visit coastalmississippi.com for a comprehensive listing of things to do.

How can you further assist?

- Reach out to us if you receive a comment or request that you are unable to address.
- Utilize our messaging strategy to ensure our region is speaking in a uniform fashion:
 - Explain that these occurrences do take place in coastal locations, they are typically temporary, and that this is not an isolated incident.
 - Reiterate our top priority of resident and visitor safety and the protection of our natural resources.
 - Reinforce the large amount of experiences available throughout the region.
- Samples include:
 - **General Concern Response:** Your safety is of the utmost importance to us and we will continue to work with our officials to ensure our communications are complete and accurate. For more information regarding the water contact warnings in Coastal Mississippi please visit <https://www.gulfcoast.org/weather-beach-updates/>.
 - **Trip Planning Concern:** Thank you for reaching out! Your safety and happiness are of the utmost importance to us. If you're planning to travel to Coastal Mississippi, here is where you can find additional itinerary ideas for your next trip: <https://www.gulfcoast.org/weather-beach-updates/>.