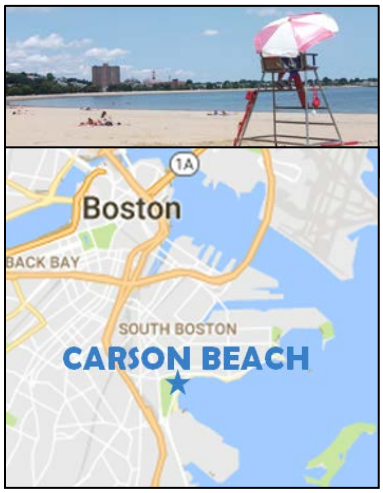
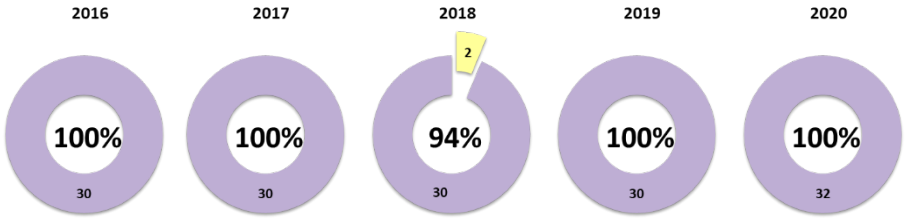
Carson Beach

Water quality at South Boston's Carson Beach meets swimming standards nearly all of the time.





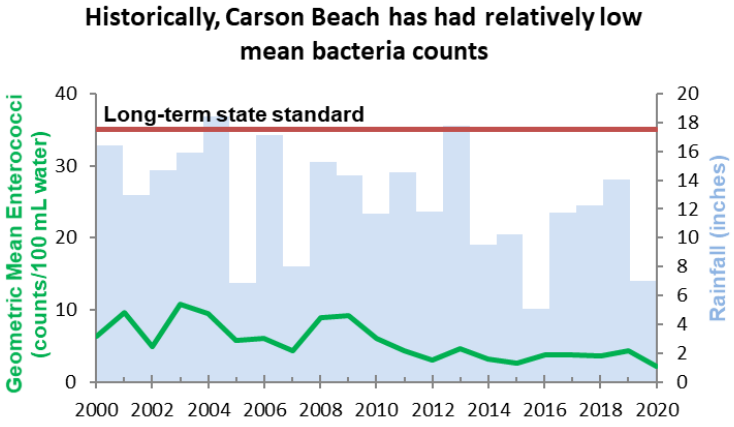
In the last five years, 94% to 100% of water samples have met swimming standards at Carson Beach. To meet the standard, a single sample must have *Enterococcus** levels of less than 104 counts in 100 milliliters (mL) of a beach water sample. Water samples are collected at two locations at Carson Beach and analyzed in a laboratory to determine the *Enterococcus* counts. Purple represents the proportion of samples meeting the standard, with less than 104 counts per 100 mL of water; yellow represents the proportion with 104 counts per 100 mL of water or higher.

* *Enterococcus* is a bacteria used as an indicator of fecal contamination in water

Beach Posting Program

Water quality at Carson Beach is monitored throughout the swimming season in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health beach testing guidelines, approximately from Memorial Day to Labor Day of each year. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation manages the beach posting program at Carson Beach, displaying blue flags at the beach when bacteria levels meet single sample limits (less than 104 counts of *Enterococcus* per 100 mL of water), and red flags when bacteria levels fail to meet the limit. Red flags are also flown following extreme weather events. The main source of high bacteria levels at Carson Beach in dry weather is from animal waste (usually birds and dogs). After heavy rain, high bacteria levels can also be caused by stormwater runoff or combined sewer overflows (CSOs). However, these overflows are rare, as MWRA's South Boston CSO storage tunnel, completed in 2011, has virtually eliminated CSO discharges to Carson Beach in all but the largest storms (those storms that occur, on average, only once every 25 years).

Historical Beach Water Quality and Rainfall



Enterococcus is a bacterial indicator of human and animal waste in marine waters, and its presence helps environmental managers determine if conditions might present a public health risk to swimmers. In addition to the single sample standard above, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires that long-term *Enterococcus* levels are below a long-term standard of 35 counts per 100 mL of water in all recreational swimming areas. Long-term averages at Carson Beach have historically been well below this threshold, even in seasons with heavy rain.

For up-to-date information regarding the water quality at marine beaches, please visit DPH's beach water quality page.
For questions about this fact sheet, email the **Massachusetts Water Resources Authority** at web.enquad@mwra.com.
Last updated 9/23/2020.