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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFERS IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION REGARDING DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL**

*~Floridians and visitors reminded to avoid contact with tar and oiled debris~*

**TALLAHASSEE** – As part of Florida’s ongoing efforts to help ensure the health and safety of individuals regarding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) is reminding Florida’s residents and visitors to avoid contact with oil products such as tar balls and tar mats.

“At this time, there are no indications of health risks to Florida residents and visitors due to the Deepwater Horizon incident,” said State Surgeon General Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. “DOH and DEP are closely monitoring health and environmental impacts to Florida and county health departments will issue an advisory if conditions become unsafe.”

- If residents or visitors see tar or oiled debris on the beach, **DO NOT PICK IT UP**. Report it to the Florida State Warning Point by calling #DEP from a cell phone or **1-877-2-SAVE-FL** (1-877-272-8335).
- For most people, an occasional brief contact with small amounts oil, while not recommended, will do no harm.
- However, some people are sensitive to chemicals, including hydrocarbons found in the crude oil and petroleum products. They may experience skin or eye irritation even from brief contact with oil.
- In general, contact with oil should be avoided. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap or grease-cutting dishwashing detergents and water. DOH discourages the use of gasoline, kerosene or other solvents to clean oil from skin.
- Volunteers helping with response efforts are not to engage in direct contact with oil and oil-contaminated products such as tar balls, tar patty, tar mats, and oil sheen.
- Only qualified community responders should handle oil products and oil-contaminated materials.

Residents and visitors wanting to help with response efforts including Coast Watch, pre-oil landfall beach cleanups and other activities are encouraged to register with Volunteer Florida at [www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org](http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org).

Since the Deepwater Horizon crude oil release began in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, Unified Command, as well as the DOH and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), have been monitoring and responding to potential public health and environmental concerns. Environmental data, including air quality and water samples, are being collected on an ongoing basis by response teams positioned along the coastline outlined in Governor Crist's Executive Orders [10-99](#) and [10-100](#). This data is used to determine if there are potential risks to public health and the environment.

To learn more about the potential health impacts and first aid measures regarding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, download the [frequently asked questions](#) at [www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com).

For general health information questions regarding the oil-spill and exposure to oil spill products contact the Florida Poison Information Centers at **1-800-222-1222**.

In addition, the Florida Oil Spill Information Line, **1-800-337-3569**, is in operation from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days a week. Additional phone numbers have also been established for persons with disabilities: (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (voice).

To stay up-to-date regarding Florida's ongoing oil spill efforts visit [www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonflorida.com) and sign up for email updates. You may also follow Florida's response efforts on twitter at [www.Twitter.com/FLDEPAlert](http://www.Twitter.com/FLDEPAlert).

DOH promotes, protects and improves the health of all people in Florida. For more information, visit [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us).

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