

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 05/20/2020

CONTACT: Chris Klawuhn, R.S., M.S.A.
TITLE: Environmental Health Services Director
PHONE: (989) 758-3686
EMAIL: cklawuhn@saginawcounty.com

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

(SAGINAW) – The Saginaw County Health Department issues this Public Health Advisory:

The recent heavy rains have resulted in the discharge of untreated sewage into the North Branch of the Bad River. Elevated levels of E. coli bacteria can be expected in the North Branch of the Bad River as the plume of sewage flows to the Shiawassee River through the State Game Area and National Wildlife Refuge to the Saginaw River.

People are advised to avoid contact with water in these rivers until further notice. The Health Department recommends against swimming, wading, or types of water recreation that could cause water to be swallowed or get into the mouth, nose or eyes. People should also avoid direct skin contact if possible, and immediately wash with soap and clean water if they have exposure to the water. Exposure to any recreational water can be a health hazard. Gastrointestinal and dermatological illnesses have been associated with recreational water exposure.

The advisory will stay in place until surface water sampling shows a significant reduction in E. coli bacteria contamination.

By Order of the Health Officer

Christina A. Harrington, M.P.H.

The Health Department is also urging residents to be safe during and after flooding by doing the following:

- Stay away from puddles, rivers, and streams.

- Do not attempt to drive vehicles around road barriers for road closures.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Stay away from stray or wild animals, and do not touch dead animals.
- Never use electrical equipment in wet area, and
- Do not let children go outdoors alone.

Any residents that evacuate need to be mindful to stay safe from COVID-19 by washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, isolating as much as possible when sick, avoiding touching your face, avoiding those who are sick and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces. It is also important to practice social distancing by keeping at least six feet between yourself and others.

Residents that need to seek a shelter location should remain vigilant and wear face covers or masks, make sure to perform frequent handwashing and to social distance in the shelters. Shelters will be making every effort possible to adhere to these prevention strategies.

For further information, call the Health Department's Environmental Health Services Division at (989) 758-3686 or visit *Flood Safety* on the Hot Topics section of our homepage at www.saginawpublichealth.org. Be Wise. Be Well.

END