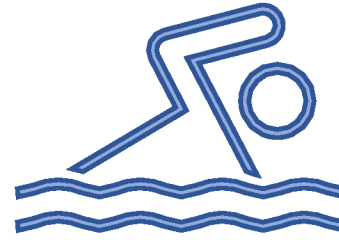


Bacteria Criteria



- 391-3-6-.03 (12): Bacteria Criteria
- The criteria for bacteria provide the regulatory framework to support the USEPA requirement that States protect all waters for primary contact recreation use. The bacterial indicators for recreation waters are E. coli and enterococci. The bacterial indicator for secondary contact recreational waters is fecal coliform, E. coli or enterococci.
 - (a) Fecal coliform, E. coli and enterococci bacteria live in the intestinal tract of warm blooded animals including man. These organisms are excreted in extremely high numbers. Pathogenic bacteria also originate in the fecal material of diseased persons. Therefore, waters with high levels of bacteria represent potential problem areas for swimming. Scientific studies indicate there is a positive correlation between E. coli and enterococci counts and gastrointestinal illness. However, there is no positive scientific evidence correlating elevated fecal coliform counts with transmission of enteric diseases. In addition, these bacteria can originate from any warm blooded animal or from the soil.
 - (b) Monitoring programs have documented bacterial levels in excess of the criteria in many streams and rivers in urban areas, agricultural areas, and even in areas not extensively impacted by man such as national forest areas. This is not a unique situation to Georgia as similar levels of bacteria have been documented in streams across the nation.