



TESTING OUR WATER QUALITY

Whether underwater or under stacks of legal briefs, much of our work takes place behind the scenes. But our most public-facing program is also one of our most successful, bringing us into contact with thousands of Miami residents and visitors every week.

Biscayne Bay suffers from chronic episodes of high bacteria, but the Department of Health's Healthy Beaches program samples a limited number of beachside locations—and that data is difficult for the public to access. Our water quality testing, focused on monitoring the presence of fecal indicator bacteria like Enterococci, serves as a crucial aspect of our efforts to safeguard public health. These bacteria act as reliable indicators of potential contamination from fecal matter, which can pose serious health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children and older individuals. Elevated levels of fecal indicator bacteria in water can lead to various health issues, including gastrointestinal illnesses and skin problems. In order to give the community the information it needs to make safe, responsible decisions, Miami Waterkeeper monitors bacteria levels at upwards of 20 locations and reports those results immediately on our website, social media, and on a desktop/mobile app: Swim Guide. Our easy-to-read stoplight-reporting format lets the public know if their favorite sites are safe for recreation.



In addition to bacteria reports, we monitor temperature, salinity, chlorophyll-a, and other factors that allow our team to conduct a more detailed analysis of the water. This real-time data, obtained on a weekly basis, provides our team with a baseline to understand regional water-quality trends and prepare for potential pollution events.



+1 (305) 905-0856
hello@miamiwaterkeeper.org
www.miamiwaterkeeper.org

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