



**For immediate release
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DCR CLOSES SHANNON BEACH AND PLAYGROUND FACILITY

Several cases of bacterial infection reported

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) closed the Shannon Beach and Playground facility in Winchester at 3 p.m. today after the state Department of Public Health (DPH) reported several cases of shigellosis, a bacterial infection. Information obtained from individuals diagnosed with shigellosis suggests the illness may have been acquired at the facility.

“In the interest of public health and safety, we closed the Shannon Beach facility immediately upon learning of the apparent bacterial contamination,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “We thank DPH for informing us of this outbreak, and we appreciate the public’s understanding.”

While those affected live in a number of different communities, all reported visiting Shannon Beach within the last three weeks.

Shigellosis is caused by the Shigella bacteria. Symptoms can include diarrhea, fever, nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting. The disease is not life-threatening, and not all those infected become sick. However, even those without symptoms can spread the disease. The Shigella bacteria must be ingested to cause infection.

“DPH encourages anyone who may have visited the Shannon Beach and Playground facility and who has any of these symptoms, particularly unresolved diarrheal illness, to contact their health care provider,” said DPH Commissioner John Auerbach. “The best prevention is washing hands with soap, particularly after using the toilet or changing diapers. Soap kills the bacteria.”

The Shannon Beach facility will remain closed until further notice. This precaution will allow DPH officials to conduct further tests to determine the possible source of the bacteria. DCR will work closely with DPH officials to inspect and sanitize the restrooms, playground equipment, and other materials at the site.

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For more information on the Shigella bacteria and shigellosis, visit www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/shigella.pdf or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/shigellosis_gi.html.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.