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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAYOR ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF LAKEFRONT BEACHES FOR THE SEASON
UNDER OPEN CHICAGO INITIATIVE**

*2021 beach season kicks off May 28 and runs through Labor Day, rapid testing in all
Chicago beaches and advisories available online*

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Park District today announced 22 beaches will open this Friday, May 28th for the 2021 season. The return of beach season is another step forward with Open Chicago, the Mayor's initiative to safely and fully reopen the city. This Friday will mark the first time Chicago beaches have opened for public use since September 2, 2019, due to COVID-19 health and safety precautions. The 2021 beach season runs through Monday, September 6, 2021.

<https://youtu.be/FMpaaHD4IkQ>



"As the weather warms up and our city begins to safely return to a sense of normalcy, reopening our beloved lakefront beaches is the perfect way to turn the page on spring and get back to our favorite outdoor activities," said Mayor Lightfoot. "While we are excited for folks to return to our beaches this summer, we still



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encourage everyone to be safe and continue to get vaccinated. This exciting announcement is the result of the tremendous progress we've made in our efforts to slow and stop the spread of this virus and I urge everyone to keep up the good work so we can reopen even more of our iconic summertime attractions in the near future."

Under the City's current guidelines for the Chicago Bridge Phase, residents can look forward to a typical beach experience. With the exception of drinking fountains, which remain shut off due to public health guidance, all traditional beach amenities will be available.

"We are thrilled to welcome residents and visitors back to our beaches," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. "Chicago's lakefront and beaches are among the city's most popular summer destinations. We urge beachgoers to enjoy their visits responsibly by properly discarding their trash and respecting the flag system and only entering the water when lifeguards are present."

Juneway, Roger, Howard, and Fargo beaches remain closed to the public due to high lake levels and erosion.

The Chicago Park District will continue to utilize the flag notification system and interactive web page to display swim status, water quality, weather data, location information, amenities, directions and historical details about each of the 26 lakefront beach locations and Humboldt Park Beach.

The following flag notification system tells patrons the current status of beaches:

- **Green** – Swimming is permitted. Weather conditions are fair and water quality is good.
- **Yellow** – Swimming is permitted, but caution is advised. Weather conditions are unpredictable, or bacteria levels are higher than the water quality criteria set by EPA for notifying the public.
- **Red** – Swimming is not permitted. Weather conditions are dangerous, or water quality conditions are dangerous.

Additional signage that reads "Swim Only When Lifeguards Are On Duty" is installed on every lifeguard perch last year to reinforce swim guidelines. Flag poles are also placed at all swimming beaches. Lifeguards will prominently post a red flag at the end of the night to remind patrons that swimming is no longer permitted. That flag will remain in place throughout the night until the start of the next lifeguard shift.



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The Park District ensures quality conditions for residents and visitors who frequent the beaches and lakefront by working round the clock to keep 26- miles of lakefront clean during the beach season.

As in past years, the Park District will partner with the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health using the USEPA's rapid test method at all beaches. This method uses DNA detection of Enterococci instead of culturing live E. coli bacteria cells, and cuts the time required for test results from 18 to 24 hours to only 3 to 4 hours.

Water quality conditions can change dramatically from day to day; therefore, faster results provide more accurate information for the public and better protection of public health. Beaches will be sampled seven days a week and information will be reported to the public via Chicago Park District website and social media accounts, a beach hotline, and a color-coded flag system at the beaches. Sampling of bacteria levels in the water is performed following criteria established by USEPA. Enterococci is an indicator of the presence of pathogens that could make you sick. The US EPA recommends notifying the public when Enterococci bacteria levels are above 1000 CCE.

It should be noted that maintenance needs to beaches and recreational activities change based on cyclical lake levels. Patrons are encouraged to visit the Park District website for updates.

Lakefront concessionaires will also return this year beginning Memorial Day weekend. The Chicago Park District is pleased to welcome back more than 115 concessions for the 2021 season featuring a variety of both indoor and outdoor dining experiences, water recreational activities, and retail options. Reggie's on the Beach will return to 63rd Street Beach with enhanced services including expanded second-floor promenade seating and beach amenity rentals.

New concepts are arriving this season at Rainbow Beach and the newly constructed South Shore Beach House, in addition to proposed beach amenity rentals at 57th Street.

In addition to beaches, other park facilities and opportunities are available. The Lakefront Trail remains open for pedestrian and recreational use. The Chicago Park District recently switched on the Buckingham Fountain for the first time since 2019 and looks forward to summer programming, including day camp. Registration is underway. Visit chicagoparkdistrict.com to view and register for summer programs.

Patrons are asked to observe the following beach rules:



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- Obey lifeguards and swim only when lifeguards are present.
- No glass, alcohol, or smoking on the beach.
- Properly dispose of food, diapers, and other refuse. Do not feed birds. Dogs are only allowed in designated dog areas.
- Please put swim diapers on small children.
- Grilling is only allowed in designated areas and coals should be disposed of in the red-hot metal containers.
- Keep accessible beach walks clear. No bicycling, skateboarding, or rollerblading is permitted in these areas.
- Access to the Lake Michigan Water Trail for sports such as kayaking, canoeing, and other non-motorized board or paddle sports is allowed at 12th Street Beach. For more information, go to the rules page and download information on Lake Michigan water trails.
- Kiteboarding is not permitted at 12th Street Beach; kiteboarding is ONLY permitted at Montrose Beach.
- Swimming is permitted and lifeguards are on duty at all beaches from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., unless otherwise posted.

Beachgoers can also access information on swim status by calling the Chicago Park District Beach Hotline at 312-74-BEACH, checking chicagoparkdistrict.com or following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the swim status at each beach.

Admission to Chicago's beaches is free. For a list of locations or for more information, visit the Park District website at chicagoparkdistrict.com or call the Beaches and Pools Unit at 773-363-2225.