



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT  
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SPENCER J. COX  
Lieutenant Governor

Department of  
Environmental Quality

Alan Matheson  
Executive Director

Brad T Johnson  
Deputy Director

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT

Donna Kemp Spangler  
Communications Director  
Office: 801-536-4484  
Cell: 801-554-4944  
[dspangler@utah.gov](mailto:dspangler@utah.gov)

## Utah Lake Reopens After Toxin Results Show Downward Trend

*Public warning issued for swimming, water skiing, or any contact with water*

SALT LAKE CITY -- Public health officials have modified Utah Lake restrictions, reopening the Lake for boating, based on the latest round of samples analyzed by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that indicate blue-green algae is dissipating at most locations in Utah Lake, the Jordan River and associated canals.

The lake is not recommended for swimming, jet skiing and other water sports having contact with the lake water. The advisory for the lake is being downgraded to a "WARNING," rather than a closure. While testing continues recreational users should adhere to posted signs and use caution.

Officials expect additional results from toxin tests early next week.

The public is asked to remain watchful and report any changes in water color that may indicate presence of blue-green algae. Elevated levels of nutrients, combined with warm temperature, abundant sunlight and calm water can promote rapid algal growth. Symptoms of cyanotoxin poisoning include headache, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, and sometimes allergic-like reactions from the skin. .

"This is encouraging news," said Ben Holcomb, coordinator of Water Quality's Harmful Algae Bloom Program. "Yet under the right conditions algae blooms can reappear so we remain cautious."

Sampling results from the previous week show low to no detection of toxins in the open waters of Utah Lake except for at Lincoln Beach/Harbor area where samples were much greater than the recreational threshold.

The Utah Department of Health and Utah County Health Department closed Utah Lake on July 15, 2016, when lab results showed concentrations of algal cells in the water three times the threshold considered an acute health risk by the World Health Organization.

UCHD Executive Director, Ralph Clegg says "We will continue working with the state to monitor the lake. Ongoing monitoring is vital since this is still early in the season for algal blooms. We will continue to inform the public of health risks associated with algal blooms."

Further tests confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria in Jordan River and related canals on July

17, which prompted the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to strongly advise farmers and ranchers against using water from Utah Lake for food production and livestock watering. Canal companies shut off secondary water as a precaution. The advisory was lifted on July 22. Drinking water was not at risk because it comes from a different source.

The Utah County portion of Jordan River remains open, with posted “CAUTION” signs. There are “WARNING” and “CAUTION” signs posted along the Salt Lake County portions of the Jordan River based on test results.

Signs posted around the lake note that toxic algae is present, the lake is unsafe for people and pets and instruct people to:

- Do not swim or water ski in area of scum
- Do not drink lake water
- Keep pets and livestock away
- Clean fish well and discard guts
- Avoid areas of scum when boating

For concerns about possible human exposure, call Utah Poison Control at 800-222-1222, or your physician. For concerns about possible animal exposure; contact a local veterinarian.

For updates, visit: <http://deq.utah.gov/locations/U/utahlake/algal-bloom.htm>

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#### About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah’s air, land and water. For more information, visit [www.deq.utah.gov](http://www.deq.utah.gov), follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)), or call 1-800-458-0145.

