

**CHAPTER FOUR
PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION**

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Regulatory Issues

- Contamination of seafood
- Health risks associated with contact recreation

Federal Legislation

- Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- Water Quality Act

Federal Regulatory Agencies

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Coast Guard

State Legislation and Regulations

- Texas Health and Safety Code

State Regulatory Agencies

- Texas Department of Health

Local Regulations

- Local health ordinances

Local Regulatory Agencies

- City of Pasadena

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Though Armand Bayou is not a major commercial or sport fishing area, its lower reaches may be a potentially valuable habitat for certain commercial and recreational finfishes and shellfishes. Hence, contamination of seafood could be a potential public health concern. There may also be some public health concerns associated with boating and swimming, although Armand Bayou itself is the only watercourse in the study area which is designated for contact recreation.

FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA is the final review and approval authority over state surface water quality standards. If a state's standards are not consistent with national goals of the Clean Water Act, EPA has the authority to require the standards be adjusted to be consistent.

United States Coast Guard

The Coast Guard is usually the agency of first response for chemical spills and, depending on the size of the spill, is the lead agency for the national emergency response team. The

lead role is shared with the EPA. Clean-up efforts are coordinated with the Corps of Engineers. If a spill may have public health implications then the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta is requested to join the team.

TEXAS REGULATORY AGENCIES

Texas Department of Health

Division of Shellfish Sanitation

The Division of Shellfish Sanitation in the Texas Department of Health monitors fish and shellfish species caught in Texas waters to insure that they are safe for human consumption. TDH also conducts studies to show areas likely to be contaminated by stormwater runoff.

TDH's Epidemiological Division reviews results of testing to determine the public health risk associated with chemical or bacterial contamination of fish or shellfish. Any serious problems discovered by the Divisions of Shellfish Sanitation are reported to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department which is responsible for enforcement. The Division of Shellfish Sanitation will classify areas as opened or closed to shellfish harvest when human health risk are discovered and mark the area as polluted. The Division of Shellfish Sanitation also permits and regulates shellfish processing plants.

Other

TDH works in concert with local government health agencies in making determinations to close waters to contact recreation if there are potential public health risks.

LOCAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

City of Pasadena

Armand Bayou, the only watercourse within the watershed designated for contact recreation, lies primarily within Pasadena's boundaries. The City, along with the TDH, share responsibility and authority for closing Armand Bayou to contact recreation in the event of health concerns.