

Annapolis Protocol

The coastal marine aspects of The Guidelines are currently under review by the Marine Bathing Working Group. In this review, interest has been shown in incorporating information about the beach's catchment, moving away from the sole focus on microbiological threshold data. The Working Group has proposed adopting an approach such as the Annapolis Protocol (WHO, 1999), where the suitability of a beach for contact recreation is classified from "excellent" to "very poor". The classification is decided through consideration of the beach's recent microbiological status *and* its susceptibility to faecal contamination. By using this protocol, water managers are able to classify a beach on its 'fit' for recreational use. This 'fit' is based on the microbiological characteristics and catchment characteristics. In effect it is a decision support system that classifies the risk to the user of the bathing area, and provides guidance (by way of the catchment assessment checklist) to potential sources of pollution in the event of an exceedance.