# Sewage pollution warnings issued for 36 Cornwall beaches ahead of Easter weekend



As the Easter Bank Holiday weekend approaches, visitors to Cornwall have been advised to avoid entering the sea at numerous beaches due to widespread sewage pollution warnings. Surfers Against Sewage (SAS), a charity campaign group focused on protecting the marine environment, has reported that sewage has been released into the water at 36 different beaches across the county.

This significant environmental concern comes amid a 24-hour torrential rain warning, which has exacerbated the risk of sewage contamination. The charity has identified several locations where sewage overspills—events that commonly occur after heavy rainfall—have discharged waste into the sea. All the affected beaches and swimming spots currently display warning alerts advising the public against sea entry.

Surfers Against Sewage clarified the meaning of these warnings: "A sewage pollution alert means storm sewage has been discharged from a sewer overflow in this location within the past 48 hours," while a "pollution risk forecast or incident alert" indicates a chance that sewage may be present in the area.

The underlying issue stems from the combined storm and sewage overflow system operated by South West Water (SWW). During periods of intense rainfall, the combined storm/sewage overflows (CSOs) automatically open to prevent drainage systems from becoming overwhelmed. These overflows mix household sewage with surface run-off, which can lead to sewage backing up into homes and, significantly, the discharge of untreated waste into the sea.

Last year, the SAS charity recorded 1,853 sickness reports related to water pollution through its Safer Seas & Rivers Service app, averaging five reports daily. Moreover, nationwide data from the Environment Agency revealed that during 2024, storm overflows released sewage into rivers, lakes, and beaches for more than 3.61 million hours. In total, 450,398 spills were recorded—a figure noted to be intended only for “exceptional circumstances.”

Among the beaches included in the current warnings is the hugely popular Fistral Beach in Newquay, a well-known destination for surfing and seaside recreation.

The Express is reporting that these sewage pollution alerts coincide with severe weather conditions, underscoring the complex challenge of managing environmental health during adverse weather events.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.sas.org.uk/resource/water-quality-report-2025/> - This webpage supports the claim about sewage pollution incidents and their impact on public health, detailing how Surfers Against Sewage documented numerous cases of illnesses due to contaminated water.
* <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-culture/beaches-in-cornwall/bathing-water-quality/> - The webpage explains the bathing water quality management in Cornwall, including how sewage overflows can affect these areas.
* <https://www.sas.org.uk/region/cornwall/> - This link highlights Surfers Against Sewage's activities in Cornwall, including efforts to address pollution issues.
* <https://www.instagram.com/surfersagainstsewage/reel/DGc7bTgPWY6/> - The reel details the ongoing issue of sewage discharges into UK waterways, supporting the context of sewage pollution.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency> - The Environment Agency's official site provides information on how they manage and monitor environmental issues, including sewage overflows.