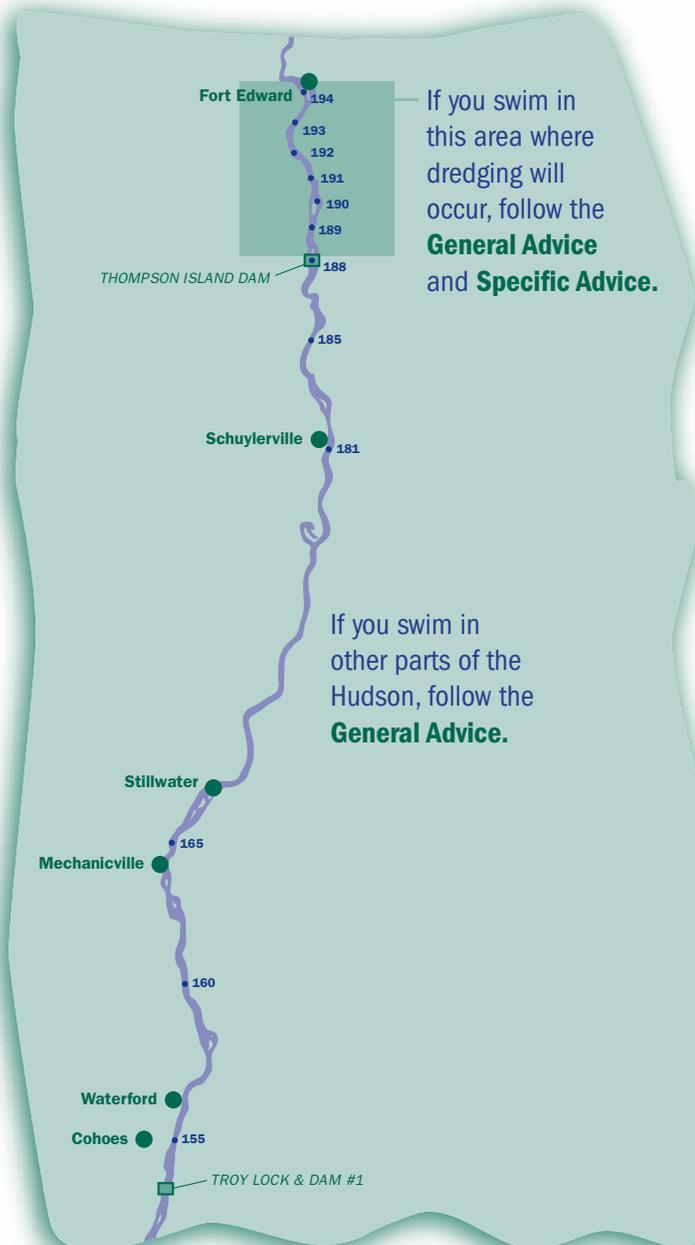


# Advice About Swimming in the Hudson River During Dredging

Recent news and inquiries from the public suggest that some people have concerns about swimming safety in the Hudson River during dredging. For most of the river, the NYS Department of Health's usual advice applies. That advice is that people who wish to swim in a river or lake can take steps to reduce exposure to bacteria and microorganisms. For the immediate area in the upper river where dredging activities are occurring, there are additional safety concerns. This fact sheet highlights NYSDOH advice for those who choose to swim in the Hudson River.



**General Advice** River and lake water may contain microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses or parasites that can make a person sick if they enter the body. Since most swimmers are exposed to these organisms by swallowing the water, people are less likely to get sick if they wade or swim without putting their head under water or avoid swallowing river water. People should wash their hands after swimming and before eating. It may also be helpful to take a shower at the end of the swimming day to wash off river water. In general, people should avoid swimming in cloudy water.

Cloudy or turbid water can contain more microorganisms than normal and also can affect a person's ability to see underwater hazards. If river water is not cloudy and people choose to swim, we advise that they follow the suggested practices of not swallowing river water and washing hands before eating. These good hygiene recommendations reduce potential exposure to a variety of contaminants.

We advise that, when possible, people swim in a regulated beach area, since safety and health concerns are considered when beaches are regulated. In regulated areas, the beach is monitored and posted for closures or swimming advisories. There are no regulated bathing beaches or swimming areas for most of the Hudson River, so people who choose to swim in the Hudson can help protect their health by following the good hygiene and safety advice listed above.

**Specific Advice** During 2009, Phase 1 dredging activities will occur within a 6-mile stretch of the river between Fort Edward and the Thompson Island Dam. In this area, there are other safety concerns. In the immediate vicinity of dredging, no one should swim because of the significant volume of boat traffic and equipment that will be operating. As you move away from the immediate dredging area, people should continue to follow the general advice to avoid swimming in cloudy water. In this short stretch of the river, cloudy water could contain both microorganisms and PCB-contaminated sediment stirred up into the water.

**Other Questions or Concerns?** Call the State Health Department at 1-800-458-1158, extension 27870.

(Over)

## Additional Information for Boaters and Jet Skiers



Recreational boaters and jet skiers should also avoid activities in the immediate vicinity of dredge operations due to equipment and safety concerns. Specific information for boaters that plan to travel near dredge operations or use the Champlain Canal is available on the web at: [www.hudsondredging.com/boater\\_report/](http://www.hudsondredging.com/boater_report/)

This site provides information regarding where dredge operations are occurring in the river, safety tips, rules and regulations, and relevant contact information.

In addition, the New York State Canal Corporation publishes “Notices to Mariners” to alert boaters to changes in operations or other issues. These notices can be viewed at: [www.nyscanals.gov/news/notices/](http://www.nyscanals.gov/news/notices/)

### About PCBs in the Hudson

Before dredging began, PCBs were present at low levels in the Hudson River water. During dredging, there may be increased levels of PCBs in river water compared to what was there before, especially just downstream of dredge operations. Despite these increases, we expect PCB levels in river water to remain low.

During dredging, General Electric is required to achieve water quality standards developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to control resuspension of PCBs in river water. The resuspension performance standard for PCBs in river water at Thompson Island (see map) is 500 parts per trillion, which is equal to the public drinking water standard for PCBs. If PCB levels exceed this standard, dredge operations must be modified to control resuspension to protect water quality.

This standard for PCBs was designed to protect public water supplies that rely on Hudson River water quality, but also provides protection for others that use the river, including swimmers.



State of New York  
Department of Health