



Removing Dead Fish and Seaweed from Florida Beaches

General Information

Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (RCP), Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) staff are available to respond to the needs of beach communities affected by fish kills related to red tide or from large accumulations of seaweed on their beaches.

- The Coastal Construction Control Line Program regulates beach cleaning and other activities on beaches seaward of an established CCCL. See the Map Direct Beaches Focus at [Map Direct: Beaches and Coastal Systems](#) and look for the red CCCL line with respect to the subject beach location to know if the beach is regulated.
- RCP/CCCL is staffed with permit managers in Tallahassee that process administrative permit applications for excavation and construction, and field inspectors that respond to beach cleaning and other requests for field services. Staff contacts are available at [Beaches and Coastal Systems - Coastal Construction Control Line - Florida DEP](#) and below.
- To evaluate a dead fish or seaweed removal effort, information is needed on the amount and location of debris, beach conditions, locations and conditions of construction access, type of equipment, times and dates of cleanup activities, and sea turtle nesting activities.
- Email this information to CCCL@FloridaDEP.gov with a request for assistance and include the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be applied to avoid potential harm to the beach and dune system and sea turtles.



Dead fish deposited on southwest Florida beach by the retreating water in association with a 2021 red tide. Smaller amounts of biotic debris such as these porgy and grunt sized fish and the seaweed wrackline can be cleaned up by conventional beach cleaning practices with tractor mounted beach rakes and disposed of landward of the CCCL.



- CCCL Permit Managers or applicants will need to consult with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff for specific recommendations on all cleanups within the sea turtle nesting season of March 1st through October 31st for Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach and Broward Counties, and May 1st through October 31st for all others.

Beach Raking

Here are suggested BMPs for removing dead fish and large accumulations of seaweed from beaches seaward of a Coastal Construction Control Line.

- Determine if dead fish and wrack accumulations are minor and capable of being handled using existing beach cleaning permit conditions (eg. low pressure tires, maximum 2-inch depth raking into sand, no blades, buckets or other equipment). Check with CCCL staff on beach cleaning permit requirements (see contact information below).
- Clean-up activities performed with hand tools, and with no mechanical equipment, sand removal, excavation or impacts to dune vegetation, is an exempt activity that does not require a CCCL permit.
- If additional equipment, heavy trucks or modified cleaning schedules and locations are needed beyond the scope of existing beach cleaning permits, develop a plan of action based on beach conditions, including stockpile areas, beach access routes, types of equipment needed, training of personnel for beach dune and coastal wildlife protection.
- Establish equipment storage, staging and debris stockpile areas off the beach and institute measures to separate the debris from sand to minimize sand removal.
- Contact FWC and the marine turtle permit holder conducting sea turtle nesting surveys to coordinate prior to driving on or equipment use on the beach. Access to the beach may need to wait until nesting surveys and other sea turtle conservation activities are complete (usually by 9 am). FWC staff can be reached at marineturtle@myfwc.com or 850-922-4330.
- FWC may also request coordination with shorebird monitors to avoid harm to nests, eggs and hatchlings. Where shorebirds are nesting, shorebird monitors can walk ahead of the equipment to ensure the route is clear of nests, eggs and hatchlings.
- Determine and mark with cones an access route for trucks and heavy equipment to enter the beach at existing beach access ramps.
- Drive directly down to and along the water's edge, avoiding beach dune vegetation and the wrackline and staying off the dry sand sea turtle nesting beach as much as is possible
- Before the end of the day, smooth out tire ruts and scrapes on the dry sand beach caused from removing material.
- Properly dispose of collected debris landward of the dune system and CCCL. No debris can be spread on the beach or in the dune system without specific state approvals.



Please Note:

If there is no existing beach cleaning permit or if it is not known whether there is a valid permit, call or email the CCCL program staff or the FDEP beach field inspector for your area using the contact information linked below. By contacting the Department’s staff, the best and most appropriate method for approving the work through a permit or an exemption can be determined. When removing biotic debris during sea turtle nesting season, FWC notification and close coordination with the local FWC Marine Turtle Permit Holder will be required, particularly if any mechanized or heavy equipment will be used. Also, this work is eligible for a “de minimus exemption” of the State Lands authorization provided the CCCL regulations are followed. Finally, the Department does not provide logistical assistance for removal of biotic materials from the beach seaward of an Erosion Control Line.

Note that per section 161.053, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 62B-33, Fla. Admin. Code, the CCCL lines do not cover shorelines along interior bays, lagoons, or sounds, and the CCCL program does not regulate activities on beaches around Florida’s Big Bend, or on military bases and national seashores.

Contacts!

- CCCL Program: www.FloridaDEP.gov/CCCL; [email](#); phone 850-245-8570
- Beach Field Services Administrator: Jason Spanier, [email](#); phone 850-510-5619
- Beach Field Inspectors: [contact information](#)
- CCCL Program Administrator: Doug Aarons, [email](#); phone 850-245-7672
- CCCL Permit Managers: [contact information](#)
- RCP/Beaches Programs: <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/beaches>; 850-245-2094 (RCP main line).