

DO...

...Wait until the permit holder has completed the nesting survey and marked all nests to start cleaning.

...Clean seaward above high tide line only during sea turtle nesting season in Brevard through Broward counties.

...Use rakes that penetrate less than two inches, never box blades or front or rear-mounted blades.

...Not bury debris landward of the high tide line.

...Remove all ruts from the beach.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT BEACH CLEANING

What authorizations do I need to beach clean?

To clean the beach using mechanized equipment, you need a permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. You may also need a permit from your county or city.

Where is sea turtle nesting habitat?

Nesting habitat includes all sandy beaches adjoining the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Straits of Florida in all coastal counties and all inlet shorelines of those beaches {F.A.C. 62B-55.003}. On the beach, nesting habitat extends from the high tide line to the top of the dune or seawall.

When is sea turtle nesting season?

Sea turtle nesting season starts March 1 in Brevard through Broward counties (where most leatherback nesting occurs). In all other counties, May 1 is the start of sea

turtle nesting season. Although most nesting is finished by September, the nesting season extends through October 31, when most eggs have hatched {F.A.C. 62B-55}.

Can I bury seaweed on the beach?

You may request permission to bury organic matter in the wet portion of the beach on an ebb tide. All other material must be removed immediately from the beach.

Why can't I just avoid the turtle crawls?

Data on the number of sea turtle emergences are used to determine the "status" of sea turtle species, whether they're endangered or threatened. The state has worked hard to standardize their survey procedures to provide the best data possible. It is impossible to assess turtle tracks, or to determine whether the turtle nested on a beach after mechanical cleaning has occurred.

WHOM TO CALL

To obtain a beach cleaning permit:
Florida Department of Environmental Protection,
1-877-332-4307

To find a Marine Turtle Permit Holder:
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Commission, 1-850-922-4330

To report unauthorized beach cleaning:
Florida Department of Environmental Protection,
1-888-332-4307

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Habitat and Species Conservation
Imperiled Species Management Section
620 South Meridian Street – MS 6A
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600

Visit: MyFWC.com/psm

SHARE THE BEACH

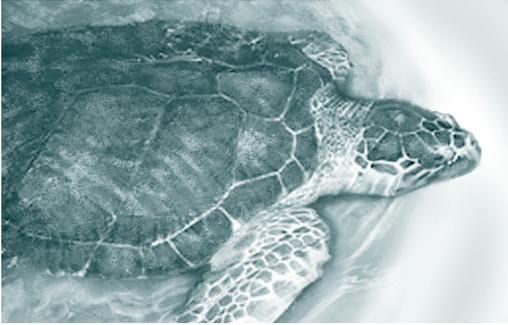
Guidelines For Beach Cleaning During Sea Turtle Nesting Season



FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

FLORIDA'S SEA TURTLES

Florida hosts the highest abundance of nesting sea turtles in the continental United States. Loggerhead, green and leatherback sea turtles commonly nest here.



THE LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE

Florida's nesting population is one of the largest for loggerhead sea turtles in this part of the world. Adult loggerheads are about 3 feet long, weigh 200-350 pounds, and are red-brown. Nests are dug on sandy coastal beaches from late April through September. After 45-60 days, 50 to 150, 2-inch hatchlings scramble from the nest at night and swim frantically offshore to their developmental habitat in the Gulf Stream.

THE GREEN SEA TURTLE

Adult green sea turtles nest May through October, with higher numbers of nests every other year.

These 300-pound, 3-foot long turtles have greenish-brown shells with beautiful markings. Green sea turtles eat plants, including sea weeds and sea grasses, and often occur in Florida's sea grass meadows or on near shore reefs. Like all sea turtles, green sea turtles are attracted to lights on beach-front buildings and may become trapped on the beach after nesting or hatching.

THE LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE

The black rubbery shell of the leatherback, the giant of the sea turtles, is very distinctive. Adults can reach 6 feet and weigh up to 2,000 pounds. This turtle will often feed on jellyfish and other animals floating in the water. Leatherbacks nest from February through August in Florida.

SEA TURTLE NESTING

Under Florida's Sea Turtle Protection Act, Florida Statute 370.12, it is illegal to harm or harass sea turtles, their nests or hatchlings. Although most nests are buried 12-24 inches deep, some are only a few inches below the beach surface. Hatchlings often sit at the top of the nest, right under the sand, for one or more days waiting to leave the nest.

BEACH CLEANING

Beach cleaning involves the removal of material left by the tides or beach goers on Florida's sandy shorelines. Stranded seaweed provides an important food source for beach and near-shore food chains, and should be left in place when possible. Human debris can pose a hazard to humans and animals and should be removed. The use of mechanized beach cleaning equipment is limited during certain times of the year when threatened and endangered sea turtles are nesting. Those beach cleaners willing to commit to special protections for sea turtles can continue to operate and share the beach with Florida's sea turtles.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates mechanized beach cleaning under the Florida Beach and Shore Preservation Act, Florida Statute 161. In order for beach cleaning to occur during nesting season, FWC and DEP have developed special conditions to protect marine turtles, their nests and hatchlings. In higher density areas where marking every nest is not feasible, non-

mechanical methods of cleaning, such as hand raking, may be necessary.

BEACH CLEANING CONDITIONS

Because of the high density of turtle nests in Brevard through Broward counties, special protection measures are required during the sea turtle nesting season (March 1 through October 31) to protect nests:

1. Cleaning can only occur seaward of the high tide line and only during the day.
2. Cleaning can only occur after a Marine Turtle Permit Holder authorized by FWC has surveyed the beach for sea turtle nests.
3. It is the beach cleaner's responsibility to contract with a permit holder to conduct nesting surveys during nesting season.
4. If no surveys are done, no cleaning can occur for up to 65 days or until after the end of the nesting season.
5. The permit holder must mark all nests within 10 feet of the high tide line.
6. Only equipment with 10 PSI tire pressure can operate on the beach.
7. Cleaning equipment must not penetrate more than two inches into the beach surface.
8. All material collected must be removed from the beach.
9. Cleaning equipment must stay at least 10 feet from salt-tolerant vegetation.



Sea turtle tracks on a beach