



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES**



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDEQ AND DMR PROVIDE TAR BALL INFORMATION

(BILOXI, Miss.) – The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) want to assure the public that measures are being taken to ensure that Mississippi beaches are safe to visit. Objects that appear to be tar balls have been found on several beaches. These are being collected and sent to Unified Command for confirmation. Finding tar balls is not uncommon on northern Gulf beaches and may result from oil spills or natural seepages on the Gulf floor, and there are other things on the beach that can be mistaken for tar balls.

Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Teams (SCAT) doing pre-spill beach survey work are finding objects. In addition, MDEQ and DMR staff have responded to the public's calls about tar ball-like objects. Some of the material found and being reported is naturally-formed material of heavy minerals, clay, and wood debris. These can be pliable and be mistaken for tar balls. Some of these items are being tested also.

Periodically, tar balls are seen on Gulf beaches due to oil spills or natural seepages of oil. They are not considered dangerous to the public, are usually consolidated, and do not leave stains on the beach. The public is advised to avoid handling them, and their locations can be reported to: 1-866-448-5816.

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and fostering wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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