

Cushendall – Bathing Water Profile

Cushendall, County Antrim, Northern Ireland



Bathing Water Profiles are designed to help the public make an informed choice before bathing, providing detailed information on the physical characteristics of each bathing water as well as assessing the pollution risk to each site. They are a requirement of The Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 and are reviewed in line with these regulations.

Historical and Current bathing water compliance classifications for Cushendall can be found at – [Bathing Water Compliance](#)

There is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48hrs after heavy or prolonged rainfall.

Description This sandy beach is approximately 400m in length and backed by a sea wall upon which a promenade and grassy area are located. Cushendall Golf Club is located further inland and the village of Cushendall is directly south of the beach. Public toilet amenities, car parking and a children’s play area are adjacent to the beach entrance. At the southern end of the bathing water, the River Dall flows onto the bathing water coming from mostly agricultural land and some urban areas and may therefore be influenced by pollution from several sources.

Cushendall bathing water is located on the east coast of County Antrim within the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Site Details Local council area – Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Year of designation – 2025

Water sampling location – Lat 55.08375, Long -6.05517

Potential Pollution and measures to reduce impact on site:

The potential sources of pollution have been split into three categories; wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges, wastewater systems in urban areas and rural source pollution, including agriculture. DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division work with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and other departments to identify and resolve sources of pollution.

Wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges.

There is a wastewater treatment works approximately 0.6km from the bathing water which discharges to the Irish Sea around 1km away. There are also several smaller wastewater treatment works serving the Cushendall area.

Wastewater systems in urban areas.

Urbanisation associated with the village of Cushendall, which lies to the south of the bathing water, is a potential source of pollution, especially during or after periods of prolonged/heavy rainfall.

In the event of prolonged/heavy rainfall the wastewater system may become overwhelmed leading to an overflow/discharge of wastewater. **This is why there is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48 hours after prolonged/heavy rainfall.**

The collection and treatment of wastewater has the potential to cause pollution as all combined collection systems are designed to overflow in periods of extreme wet weather or following failure of the system. This prevents overflows into residential properties. Within the Cushendall area there are combined sewer overflows (CSO) and wastewater pumping stations with associated emergency overflows, highlighted on Map 1.

There is also the potential for misconnections between the sewer system and surface drains, which may allow untreated wastewater to enter the water environment. Misconnections are not obvious, but when these become apparent NIEA pursues them as pollution incidents.

Rural source pollution – agriculture

The land cover within the catchment area of Cushendall bathing water is a mixture of arable and horticulture, improved grassland, and small areas of woodland. Areas within the catchment where agriculture is the dominant land use may be subject to inputs from chemical fertilisers and organic wastes. Prolonged periods of rainfall can cause surface runoff of these organic wastes, such as animal slurries, contributing to the bacteria content in the water environment.

Septic tanks also have the potential to cause localised pollution, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is impacting Cushendall bathing water.

Other potential sources of pollution.

- Dogs
- Horses
- Litter
- Fly tipping

Management measures:

The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, take an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. River Basin Management Plans (RPMP) are produced which detail all of Northern Ireland's water quality objectives and a programme of measures to achieve these objectives. Within these 'Programme of Measures' in each River Basin Management Plan are a number of measures which relate directly to the protection of bathing waters.

Cushendall bathing water is located in the North Eastern River Basin District. You can find more information about the North Eastern River Basin Management Plan below:

[Draft 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan for Northern Ireland 2021-2027](#)

Within the River Basin Management plans programme of measures there are several schemes to address sources of pollution:

- Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) 2019-2022
- Knowledge Advisory Service (KAS)
- Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS)
- Soil Nutrient Health Scheme (SNHS)

Macro-algae, phytoplankton, and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Cushendall bathing water is not at risk of a proliferation of macro-algae, phytoplankton, or cyanobacteria (blue-green algae).

What should I do if I see a pollution incident?

If you see a water pollution incident, you should immediately contact NIEA through the Emergency Water Pollution Hotline, which is operated **24 hours**.

Phone: [0800 807060](tel:0800807060)

When a pollution incident is reported or pollution is found to be affecting the water quality of a bathing water, an immediate investigation is instigated. All possible sources of pollution are checked. In addition, a resample will be collected to monitor whether the beach is still polluted. Bathing waters may be closed (by local authority or controlling body) until the water quality has improved and levels of bacteria are within mandatory standards.

Contact details

For general information about bathing waters:

DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division
17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn, BT28 3AL
Email: Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk
Website: [DAERA Bathing Water Quality](#)

Local Authority Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Address: Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY, Northern Ireland
Email: info@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 28 7034 7034
Website: [Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council](#)

Map 1 Cushendall Bathing Water



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