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Anapa to Reopen Beaches for Swimming on June 1 Following Oil Spill Cleanup

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A beach in Anapa, Krasnodar. **@opershtab23**

Beaches in the Black Sea resort town of Anapa will be ready for swimming starting next month as cleanup efforts from the December 2024 oil spill near completion, local officials said Monday.

"Today, I signed a decree establishing the dates for the 2026 swimming season at public waterfronts across Anapa. The season will officially begin on June 1 and run until Sept. 30," Anapa Mayor Svetlana Maslova said in a post on Telegram.

"Infrastructure is currently being set up along the pebble beaches and a one-kilometer stretch of sandy coastline that were previously removed from the emergency zone," Maslova added.

Swimming has been banned around the resort city of Anapa in the Krasnodar region since thousands of metric tons of heavy fuel oil, known as mazut, washed ashore after two tankers were damaged in a winter storm in the nearby Kerch Strait.

At least three Anapa beaches have received official health and safety clearance from Russia's consumer safety watchdog, Rospotrebnadzor.

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In March, regional authorities in Krasnodar began implementing a remediation plan to cover the polluted beaches with a layer of clean sand roughly 50 centimeters (20 inches) thick.

"Our goal is to prepare these areas for the start of the resort season," Krasnodar region Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said at the time.

Independent environmental experts have warned that adding a new layer of sand is effective only if the original, underlying beach was thoroughly decontaminated. Otherwise, the heavy fuel oil will eventually reemerge and pose a risk to public health.

Experts have also said that any deposits of heavy mazut that remain trapped on the seabed near the coast could loosen, float to the surface and wash onto the newly restored beaches as water temperatures rise throughout the summer.

Anapa's economy, which depends heavily on tourism, was significantly impacted by the closure of local beaches last year. The Krasnodar region government introduced a multimillion-ruble relief program to support struggling businesses in the town.

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