

## **Ocean Water Quality**

SCDHEC's Ocean Water Quality Monitoring Program allows the public to make informed decisions concerning recreating in waters with the potential to cause adverse health effects. Routine monitoring of ocean front beaches by SCDHEC began in 1998 in Horry and Georgetown counties and was expanded to include all coastal counties in 2000. Beginning in 2002, SCDHEC has been awarded grant monies by EPA under the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act. This grant money has allowed South Carolina to continue and to enhance a comprehensive monitoring and public notification program. To effectively allocate available resources, EPA required all monitoring and notification efforts be based on potential risk and intensity of use. An initial evaluation and classification of all beaches was performed to establish a three-tier monitoring program with Tier 1 beaches being highest priority. The beaches in the Pee Dee Basin are either Tier I or Tier 2. Grand Strand beaches from North Myrtle Beach south to Surfside Beach are Tier 1 beaches, and from Garden City Beach to Debordieu Beach they are considered Tier 2.