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8 beaches pass 83.4 EPD test

THE water quality in eight of Hongkong's beaches have improved, according to the latest grading by the Environmental Protection Department.

The less-polluted beaches are Deep Water Bay, Shek O, South Bay, Discovery Bay at Lantau and Tung Wan at Cheung Chau, which were upgraded from "B" to "A".

Also on this list are Repulse Bay, Ting Kau and Kadoorie, which were moved up from "C" to "B".

Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Mr Paul Holmes, said the improvement was due to a change in weather and the EPD's anti-pollution measures.

"We do not say the problem of pollution at these beaches is totally under control. But they are improving as a result of control activities," Mr Holmes said.

Five beaches, namely Anglers', Castle Peak, Silvermine Bay, Old Cafeteria and Rocky Bay, have still been branded "unsuitable for swimming purposes".

The grading system is based on the bacteria level and the E Coli data obtained by the EPD. This is done fortnightly under the EPD's water quality monitoring programme at 45 bathing beaches in the territory.

This is the last grading for this year before an annual review is conducted.

A report on the review, with recommendations on the acceptability of various beaches, will be submitted to the Urban and Regional councils by late December.

The report will cover the overall water quality at the bathing beaches over the past 12 months.

Based on the review, the EPD will identify the beaches that should be reopened and those to be closed.