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Bureau Veritas helps keep swimmers safe

The local authorities of Dieppe-Maritime and Pornic have worked for several years with leading water services company, Veolia Water, to develop water testing methodology, which the certification attests to. It is not only about guaranteeing water quality but also providing reliable information about this to the public. Bureau Veritas was part of the working group that developed the strict criteria for this certification. The group also consisted of representatives from water companies, and local and national authorities concerned with ecology, tourism and public health.

A guarantee of water quality

The idea is to have a monitoring system for swimming water quality and sources of pollution. Data to be collected daily to assess pollution risks includes observing weather conditions and simulating currents. This is in conjunction with tests already carried out by the regional authorities. The information is used to build a profile of the sea water, an essential step in defining pollution sources and developing measures to minimize risks to swimmers. The certification is based on **ISO 14001 for environmental management** and is valid for 3 years, with a yearly audit.

Although a voluntary measure, this new certification aims to encourage local authorities to be prepared for future legal obligations required by the European Commission. With the revised Bathing Water Directive, the European Commission has set an objective that by 2015, minimum standards for all public swimming areas, on the coast and inland, must be reached.

The certification has also enabled these two regions to achieve Blue Flag status and to use the prestigious Blue Flag logo in advertising and communications.

Blue Flag beaches and marinas are guaranteed among the best in the world.

For the public, the swimming water certificate offers a guarantee of quality. The new certification is good news for swimmers' health and for the tourism industry in seaside towns.

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