



A Lifeguard's Beach Safety Tips

by Sgt. Ed Fisher
Special to the Dispatch

The writer is a 17-year veteran of the Beach patrol. In the off-season, he is an elementary school teacher in Montgomery County. The OCBP consist of over 200 men and women dedicated to ocean rescue and maintaining a safe and orderly environment on Ocean City's beach. The Sure Rescue Technicians guard the beach seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.



Beach Patrol - 3 part Mission: Education, Prevention, Intervention

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When most people think of the Ocean City Beach Patrol they probably think of tan lifeguards rescuing drowning people. The Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Technicians (SRTs/lifeguard) do make rescues all the time, but there is so much more to what we do to ensure that all beach patrons are safe. Our mission statement has three aspects; education, prevention, and intervention (making rescues). In the last ten years the education portion of our mission has become a much bigger focus. The Beach Patrol has instituted and incorporated numerous things aimed at educating the public to dangers at the beach.

The Beach Patrol has made it a point to generate and distribute literature about rip currents, shallow water diving, dangerous shorebreak, and many other hazards out to the public. This literature has come in many forms. On the back of every lifeguard stand there is a sign that clearly shows information and pictures about rip currents. Our website www.ococean.com/ocbp has safety information and pictures of rip currents. Our guards also hand out pamphlets that have information about ocean safety. If you are interested in any of this information please talk to a lifeguard. They have informational brochures ready to hand out.

Another program the Beach Patrol started about 10 years ago was the Beach Safety Seminar. Every Sunday morning, in at least 17 different locations along the entire Ocean City shoreline, beach patrons can listen to a Beach Safety Seminar given by members of the Ocean City Beach Patrol. Please call our headquarters at 410-289-7556 for times and locations of these seminars. The Beach Safety Seminar has become an integral part of educating the public. Every Sunday thousands of beach patrons come and see the seminars and get the latest information about ocean safety, the Beach Patrol, and Ocean City itself.

Our lifeguards also frequently do what we call an EDU (semaphore abbreviation for education). An EDU is when a lifeguard recognizes a potential hazard or dangerous circumstances (rip current, heavy surf, etc.) and gets a group of beach patrons together to warn and inform them about the hazard. The idea is that if the public is well informed they will make better decisions, which will result in a safer beach environment for everyone. Each SRT is trained in public speaking and presenting EDUs during their required Surf Rescue Academy.

As the Beach Patrol has increased its efforts to educate the public we have seen the results pay off. We have noticed a well-informed public that understands rip currents and other dangers in the ocean.

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Why is there a big crowd gathering?



Every Sunday at 11:00 Beach Safety Seminars are held at various locations on the beach. (Usually at each Crew Chief Stand) At the Beach Safety Seminar, one of the **Surf Rescue Technicians (SRT)** from your area will gather the beach patrons around their stand and give a brief overview of Ocean City and the beach environment. They give information about any potential beach hazards. They are also available to answer any questions. The SRTs hand out sunscreen samples and the brochure “Tips To Make Your Stay in Ocean City Safe and Enjoyable.” This is a great opportunity to get those often wondered about beach questions answered!

Photo take by Kristin Josen/OCBP