

## Know Your Beach Patrol – An Organization Dedicated to a Safe and Enjoyable Beach Environment for You



The Ocean City Beach Patrol is a division of the town's Department of Recreation and Parks. OCBP consists of over 225 men and women dedicated to ocean rescue and maintaining a safe and orderly environment along the 10 miles of Ocean City's beautiful beaches. We invite you to learn more about OCBP and what it is like to be a member of this professional organization. We hope this information will assist you in making your stay in Ocean City as safe and enjoyable as possible.

**S.R.T.** stands for Surf Rescue Technician (lifeguard). This is the title earned by the men and women who have demonstrated competency in the techniques and skills required for surf rescue. SRT's duties include educating the public, warning swimmers of potential danger, rescuing distressed swimmers, responding to emergency situations, administering first aid, reuniting lost and found individuals, enforcing city ordinances, and other duties as assigned.

The beach patrol is on duty everyday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. starting the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and continuing seven days a week through the Sunday of Sunfest weekend, usually the third Sunday after Labor Day. After Labor Day, the beach patrol begins implementation of fall coverage. Fall coverage extends until the Sunday of Sunfest weekend. Fall coverage is a change in standard operating procedures as well as placement of guard stands along the beach. SRTs will be on duty between the hours of 10

a.m. and 5:30 p.m. After Sunfest weekend the beach patrol no longer mans guard stands on the beach, but roaming patrols on four-wheel-drive vehicles continue to monitor the beach through the end of October. The purpose of these patrols is to be available should beach goers not heed our strong warnings of: “Never swim when surf rescue technicians are not manning the lifeguard stands.”

Because of the uniqueness of the job’s demands, the beach patrol does not require or accept certification or past experience. All individuals seeking employment with the Ocean City Beach Patrol must successfully complete all aspects of a pre-employment physical skills evaluation. Testing for OCBP is offered in Ocean City and sometimes at off site locations. We encourage anyone interested in beginning this great adventure to call Captain Arbin at Beach Patrol Headquarters, 410-289-7556. For specifics on requirements, test locations, dates and times, please refer to [www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp); click on the JOBS button or email [ocbp@ococean.com](mailto:ocbp@ococean.com).

SRT’s are athletic, ambitious, and responsible men and women who are 17 years of age or older. Every candidate must be able to perform the following tasks: Run in soft sand; swim in ocean water; enter and exit the ocean through the surf; move an unconscious person of 150 lbs.; see for 400 meters; hear and locate whistle blast from 300 meters; speak and read the English language as well the following physical criteria.

- Complete a 300-meter soft sand run in less than 65 seconds (400-meter run in 80 seconds offsite testing).
- Complete a 400-meter ocean swim in less than 10 minutes (500 meters in less than 10 minutes offsite in a pool).
- Complete a series of simulated rescues in the surf incorporating the rescue buoy.
- Complete a rescue using a cross-chest carry and victim removal techniques.
- Complete a medley of 150-meter run, 100-meter swim and a 150-meter run.
- Complete a tower transport of the SRT chair a distance of 20 meters.
- Complete basic lifesaving skills in which you perform holds and releases in a controlled water setting.
- Complete a personal interview.

Once a candidate passes the rigorous, physical test, the Ocean City Beach Patrol provides training for the job during Surf Rescue Academy. Candidates can be assured that all necessary skills, techniques, procedures and protocols will be taught to them as part of the Surf Rescue Academy. This is an eight-day paid training program (12.99/hr and 14.07 after probation.) conducted by beach patrol instructors with support from other public safety agencies, followed by three weeks of supervised on-the-job probation. All aspects of becoming an SRT are taught during this Surf Rescue Academy. While in the academy, the rookies receive instruction in open water rescues, beach patrol policies and procedures, basic oceanography, use of rescue equipment, first aid, CPR, semaphore communications (a series of signals using flags) radio protocol, and physical training consistent with the demands of the job.

Successful completion of all phases of Surf Rescue Academy is required to earn SRT rank and assignment to the beach. When you see someone sitting on the stand guarding your beach, you can feel confident that they have gone through one of the most rigorous testing and training programs in the nation.

Once a candidate secures a job with OCBP they become a member of an organization that changes people's lives. The camaraderie, the inter-crew competitions, and the fact that they are contributing to the success of an All America City and insuring it stays one of the best resort towns, makes being a member of OCBP one of the best jobs in the world!

### **Veteran Guards Re-certify Each Summer**

Each year veteran guards of OCBP must re-qualify by passing two physical tests, a 500-meter swim in under 10 minutes and a 300-meter soft sand sprint in under 65 seconds. The test is the patrol's way of ensuring that every guard is ready to perform the physically demanding tasks of the job. After the actual testing is done, the veteran guards then re-certify in first responder skills, which include a First Aid and CPR certification. Sgt. Jamie Falcon, the patrol's Director of Training, coordinates the training program for the rookie academy and the re-certification training of veteran guards.

The beach patrol takes pride in the organization and the skills of the SRTs. What the patrol offers is a certification in surf rescue, therefore they re-certify each summer. The beach patrol training is what makes them who they are as an organization and gives them international recognition. As training improves each year so do the skills of the veteran guards and the patrol as a whole. The veteran guards and the people they guard can relax in the knowledge that everyone is prepared in every way each year for a fun filled and safe summer.

### **Surfing Beaches**

Due to the large crowds that visit Ocean City during the summer months, surfing is not permitted between 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. However, two blocks each day are set apart as daily surfing beaches. There is also a surfing beach located at the inlet Monday – Friday. No swimming or wading is permitted at the surfing beaches, and all surfers must wear ankle leashes. Surfing beach limits are established using the yellow stands. In addition, signs and flags are used to highlight the area. Surfing beaches rotate two blocks south each day. The daily surfing beach schedule is available on our website in the information section, [www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp). Surfing beach facilitators are beach patrol members who maintain the surfing beach area and wear yellow uniforms so they are not confused with SRTs. SBF's will inform you if you are on a surfing beach and show you the location of the nearest swimming beach. Surfing beach facilitators are trained similarly to SRT's and will gladly answer any questions you may have. On certain days when inclement weather affects Ocean City, the beach patrol captain may decide to allow surfing. This decision is made daily with the input of supervisors on the beach. If there are low numbers of people on the beach, and the weather is poor and not predicted to

improve for the day, the surfing ordinance may be modified. There are also many other factors taken into consideration when making this decision. On days of inclement weather, you can ask any SRT on the beach if the surfing ordinance has been modified, or call OCBP headquarters at 410-289-7556.

### **Junior Beach Patrol**

The OCBP offers a Junior Beach Patrol program each summer to individuals ages 10-17. Once enrolled, they have the opportunity to experience the training and daily routine of real "Surf Rescue Technicians" (SRT's). The program models itself after the training, workouts, duties and responsibilities of the SRT and focuses on the development of skills to enjoy the beach safely. It is designed to instruct boys and girls in the skills and techniques of beach safety, water safety, surf rescue and physical fitness. Registration for these programs begins in early March. It is recommended that you obtain a registration form and fill it out before arrival. Many SRT's made their start in lifesaving in the Junior Beach Patrol. This is a four-day program offered each week beginning in July through mid August. There is also a one afternoon introductory camp offered on Thursdays. For more information, follow the link on the beach patrol's main web page or call the Recreation and Parks Department at 410-250-0125.

### **Beach Safety Seminars**

Beach Safety Seminars are held every Sunday morning at various locations on the beach. At a beach safety seminar, one of the surf rescue technicians from your area will first give a brief overview of Ocean City and the beach environment. They will inform beach goers of weather and beach conditions for the day. They will also be available to answer any questions, so please feel free to ask. It is also not unusual for the SRT to have give-aways, so please do bring the kids.

### **Public Education Outreach Programs**

The beach patrol offers activities, programs, speakers and seminars to various groups such as scouts, church groups, camps, schools and civic organizations. They conduct these water/beach safety seminars both in Ocean City and throughout the region. Safety training focuses primarily on drowning prevention and safety around the water. They also provide many helpful tips on how to keep children safe at the beach. These presentations and hands-on activities are critical in allowing the beach patrol to fulfill their three-part mission of education, prevention and intervention. If you have a group interested in a beach safety program or speaker, contact the beach patrol at 410-289-7556 or email [ocbp@ococean.com](mailto:ocbp@ococean.com).

Ocean City is a great resort to visit anytime. On Memorial Day weekend, when thousands of beach goers come to Ocean City to enjoy the beginning of another summer season, and the white stands are manned by the best lifeguards in the nation, you'll know that it is not a "just-add-water" beach patrol. Many months of off-season work have gone into delivering one of the most professional and best beach patrols in the world, because we believe you deserve nothing less. Enjoy your upcoming beach season and rest

assured that our number-one priority is the safety of every individual that steps foot on the pristine, white sand beaches we all know and love.

If you want to learn more about the Ocean City Beach Patrol and the programs they offer, log onto [www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp). Always remember: “Keep your feet in the sand until the lifeguard’s in the stand!”