

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



The Ocean City Beach Patrol is an organization of over 200 men and women dedicated to ocean rescue, beach safety, and maintaining a safe and orderly environment along the 10 miles of Ocean City's beautiful beaches. We invite you to learn more about the OCBP and what it is like to be a member of this organization. It is our hope that this information will assist you in making your beach days 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. The 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 every day from 10:00a.m. to 5:30 p.m. beginning the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend continuously until the third Sunday after Labor Day. The beach patrol deploys a fall coverage scheme following Labor Day that extends until the end of the season. Our fall coverage changes significantly from our summer deployment. We rely heavily on our ATVs and spread the stationary stands out to maximize eyes on the ocean at all times. The guarded beaches remain 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. After the third Sunday following Labor Day, the beach patrol removes all guard stands from the beach and only deploys emergency response vehicles as a means to monitor the beach through Columbus Day. It is vitally important that beach patrons heed our warnings and do not swim in the Atlantic Ocean when guards are not on duty. If you see someone in trouble out in the ocean, dial 911 immediately and stay on location until rescue swimmers arrive. The emergency personnel may need your assistance in identifying and locating the person(s) in distress. Again, we urge you to heed our warnings to never swim in the ocean when surf rescue technicians are not up in the lifeguard stands.



Here are a couple of things to know about becoming an SRT. 1. Because of the uniqueness of the job's demands, the beach patrol does not require or accept certification or past experience. 2. All individuals seeking employment with the Ocean City Beach Patrol must successfully complete all aspects of a pre-employment physical skills evaluation. 3. Testing for OCBP is offered in Ocean City and at off-site testing locations. 4. We

encourage anyone interested in beginning this great adventure to call Beach Patrol Headquarters at 410-289-7556 for specifics on requirements, test locations, dates and times. Interested candidates can also 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 16 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 being able to demonstrate 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 in less than 4:30
- 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, he or she is provided training for the job during the Ocean City Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Academy. Candidates can be assured that all necessary skills, techniques, procedures, and protocols will be taught to them as part of their learning experience. The Surf Rescue Academy is an eight-day paid training program conducted by beach patrol instructors with support from other public safety agencies. SRA is followed by three weeks of supervised, on-the-job probation. While in the academy, first year employees receive instruction in open water rescues, beach patrol policies and procedures, basic oceanography, use of rescue equipment, first aid, CPR, AED, hole collapse, search and recovery, 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 the 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 successfully completed 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 ensuring that it stays one of the best resort towns in the nation, 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 the ocean in under 10 minutes and a 300-meter soft sand sprint in under 65 seconds. The re-qualification is the patrol's way of ensuring that every guard is ready to perform the physically demanding tasks of the job. After the reassessment is complete, the veteran guards then re-certify in first responder skills, which include a First Aid, CPR/AED certification, and the Stop the Bleed protocol.



The beach patrol invests heavily in the organization and the skills of the SRTs. The patrol offers a certification in surf rescue; therefore, the guards must re-certify each



summer. The beach patrol training is unique to the agency and it has earned the beach patrol 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 rest in the knowledge that everyone is prepared in every way each year for a safe and fun filled season.

## Surfing Beaches

Due to the large crowds that visit Ocean City during the summer months, surfing is restricted between 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. except in designated locations. The beach patrol facilitates three surfing beaches every day. Two blocks each day are set apart as daily, rotating surfing

beaches. There is also a surfing beach located near the south Ocean City jetty at the inlet during weekdays. No swimming or wading is permitted at the surfing beaches as these areas are maintained for surfers only. All surfers must wear ankle leashes when in the designated surfing area. Surfing beach limits are established using the yellow stands and feather signs. In addition, polycarbonate signage is also prominently displayed to highlight the area. Surfing beaches rotate two blocks south each day. The daily surfing beach schedule is on the OCBP homepage of the website [www.ococean.com/ocbp](http://www.ococean.com/ocbp). Surfing Beach Facilitators (SBFs) are beach patrol members who maintain the surfing beach area and wear yellow uniforms so they are not confused with SRTs. SBFs inform beach patrons of the location of the nearest swimming beach. Surfing Beach Facilitators are trained similarly to SRTs 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 a modified surfing status. This decision is made when circumstances warrant input of supervisors on the beach and there are low numbers of people on the beach. and the weather is poor and not predicted to improve for the day. 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, campers 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 March. It is recommended that you register early as the program has become extremely popular with waiting lists to participate. Many SRT's made their start in lifesaving in the Junior Beach Patrol. There is a four-day program offered each week beginning in July through mid-August. There are also afternoon introductory camps 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 Presentations**

Beach Safety Presentations are held every Sunday morning at various locations along the beach. At the presentation, 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 and forecasts for the week. 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 giveaways, so please do bring the kids.

### **Public Education Outreach Program**

The OCBP prioritizes education in every facet of its daily operation. Not only do we say



it is important but have incorporated it into the first part of our mission statement. You have already read about some of the major components of the Educational Outreach Program, that reaches all ages of visitors and residents of Ocean City from the time they awake in the morning to the time they go to bed at night.

In addition, 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 to the accomplishment of the beach patrol fulfilling its 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) to request scheduling information.

We strive to constantly reflect and evaluate ways to improve the methods and procedures we incorporate to keep people safe. Our statistics have validated the effectiveness of this outreach program: the greatest impact being the reduction of drowning deaths during the times when we are off duty. Prior to our educational emphasis, we experienced an average of 3 – 4 preventable drowning deaths during our off-duty hours a year, and in the past 10 years have seen that statistic decline to less than 1 every 3 years. This does not even account for the reduction of off duty near drownings (911 calls for swimmers in distress).



The OCBP Education Outreach Program not only has a local focus but includes regional, national, and international components.

Ocean City is a great resort to visit or reside. 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 staffed by the best lifeguards in the nation, you now know that it is not a “just-add-water” beach patrol. Many months of off-season preparation and work has gone into delivering one of the most professional and best beach patrols in the world. Enjoy the off season and in the upcoming beach season, you can rest assured that our number-one priority is the safety of every individual who steps on our pristine, white sandy beaches we all know and love.

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