

Ocean City Stand-up Paddle Board Pilot Program for the 2014 Season

At the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting January 14, 2014 the Beach Patrol was asked to look into finding a way to safely allow operators of stand-up paddleboards (SUP) access to the ocean in September, prior to the September 30 expiration of the current beach code restrictions. The senior staff of the Beach Patrol was polled for suggestions on how to make this work and subsequently developed a proposal. The proposal was presented as a "Pilot Program" at the February 11 meeting of the Commission with members of the Surf Beach Sub-Committee in attendance. After a review of the Pilot Program, there was a brief discussion, followed by a unanimous vote of the Commission members to take the proposal before the full Council.

SUP Pilot Program Provisions and Rules

-Stand Up Paddleboards (SUP) may have full access to the ocean, to include the surf zone on days when surfing is modified starting on the Monday that follows Labor Day (Monday, September 8, 2014). This provides for 22 additional days of access over the existing code.

-On days when surfing is not modified during the period from the Monday following Labor Day (September 8, 2014) to September 30 (last day of current ordinance), SUP access will be prohibited.

-All SUP operators shall stay 50 yards away from all swimmers, waders and surfers while launching and beaching and while operating in the surf zone or beyond the surf zone.

-Any SUP operator may be asked to return to shore if a Beach Patrol member deems their activity to be a possible hazard to the operator or other person (Pursuant to section 106-93 of the City Code). This includes, but is not limited to, hazardous weather such as lightning, or unsafe surf conditions.

-SUP operators must follow all applicable state and federal laws governing stand-up paddle boards and shall have a wearable Type I, II, III or V personal floatation devise (PFD) on board and a whistle.

-SUP shall be restricted to one operator/rider per board.

-All SUP operators shall have a leash that attached the operator to their board whenever they are using the board in the ocean.

- Once beyond the breakers as determined by the Surf Rescue Technician (SRT) on duty the, the SUP shall operate in a north or south direction parallel to the beach and no further from shore than 200 yards.

- When a SUP is returning to the beach (traveling west) while the Beach Patrol is on duty, the operator shall return within 50 yards of an SRT on duty, so that the SRT can direct operator to a safe area and assist in keeping people clear until the SUP is safely under control and on the beach.