



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.



What to Bring ... and not Bring to the Beach

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A trip to the beach is always better when you have everything you need. Taking the time to make sure you have everything will undoubtedly make your day at the beach more enjoyable. Getting prepared for a day at the beach is like being a boy scout. You better be prepared.



As lifeguards leave the beach at 5:30 p.m., this family continues to enjoy their day at the beach but will pass on any water-related activities until the lifeguards return to duty at 10 a.m. the following day.

First and foremost make sure you bring sun block and water. These two items are not only essential to a good beach day, but to your health. Bring plenty of water to make sure you stay hydrated all day. One trick that a lot of lifeguards use is freezing a container of water. The container will melt throughout the day and you will have cool water all day.

I cannot over stress the importance of wearing plenty of sun block. A bad sunburn is sure to put a damper on a least a few days of any vacation. Every summer we see cases of sunburn that are so severe medical treatment is required. The key is wearing a SPF 15 or higher, and even more importantly reapplying frequently throughout the day. Another important item to have with you are any medications that you might need throughout the day, especially items that may be needed in an emergency such as heart medication, asthma inhaler, Epi pen, etc.

Beach Patrons sometimes make the mistake and bring some unnecessary items to the beach. The top of that list is alcohol. Alcohol is illegal on the beach in Ocean City and is a citable offense that will be enforced by the Ocean City Beach Patrol and Ocean City Police Department. Besides being illegal, alcohol increases your chances of being stricken by a heat related illness, as 100's are each season. We also recommend that people do not bring items of value to the beach. Already this summer one of our Sergeants was involved with a lost engagement ring that was valued at over \$10,000. The Beach Patrol does not recommend bringing any items of significant value to the beach. Losing something like an engagement ring, expensive eyeglasses, or wallet can be quite upsetting. Almost daily people lose prescription eyeglasses in the surf never to be recovered. Furthermore, we deal with dozens of thefts on the beach every summer. Keep it simple and just bring the basics to the beach. Cheers!