



Dear OCJG Customers,

We can appreciate our customers' concern about the shark activity that has been occurring in our area. There has been quite a bit of coverage from the main stream and social media which has heightened awareness and anxiety. Please be assured that our number one priority is the safety of our junior guards. We want our customers and students to know some facts about sharks and how our lifeguard agency and others throughout Orange County are dealing with their presence.

We feel it is important to recognize that sharks are ever-present in the ocean yet continue to be one of the lowest risk factors for humans in the beach environment. Millions of visitors enjoy the beaches of Orange County every year without ever encountering a shark. We want to stress that there is far more serious potential for injury or death at the beach relating to inadequate ocean skills and/or knowledge about waves, currents and surf equipment. Our JG Program is designed to reduce the risk of injury and death through education and providing these skills for our JG students. We also want to put into perspective that we have many other hazardous ocean scenarios that can and have impacted our program, which we have prepared for and implemented alternative plans to keep our students safe. Conditions such as lightning, red flag surf, pollution, and even tsunami have all occurred during our JG sessions far more often than shark sightings and pose a more serious threat to life and safety. In all cases, we have successfully adjusted our activities to ensure the safety and fun for the students. As lifeguards, we must always be prepared for the ocean to throw a curve ball into our plans.

All this in consideration, OC Lifeguards is taking shark safety very seriously. Preventative procedures will be exercised on a regular basis to protect our junior guards. The procedures include:

- 1) Patrolling and monitoring the waters from land, sea and air.
- 2) We will utilize lifeguards on stand up and prone paddle boards for routine buoy swims and paddles and our jet ski on longer distance water events to patrol the water ahead of the JGs entering the water and to keep observation at all times around the JGs. We will also reconfigure our longer distance swims and paddles to more shore parallel patterns at closer distances from shore.
- 3) We will limit water activity to the extreme shallows for the duration of any Shark Advisory Period that affects our camp area. We have a variety of alternative beach activities planned for these occasions.
- 4) Immediate notification between local and adjacent lifeguard and public safety personnel if there is shark activity reported in the area
- 5) Coordination of alert levels and warnings to the public between adjacent lifeguard jurisdictions to ensure advisory or closure zones are consistent

- 6) We want to be available and responsive to any concerns our customers or beach visitors may have about sharks or any other potential hazard. Our number one goal is the safety of our students and to implement prudent preventative measures that will help us achieve this goal.

In addition to procedures we will be exercising on a daily basis, OC Lifeguards has been a part of a regional planning group including agencies from LA to San Diego that has developed a regional shark policy with the assistance of shark expert, Dr. Chris Lowe, with CSULB Shark Lab. Lifeguard personnel across the region use the policy as a guideline and implement similar procedures when responding to any sightings or aggressive behavior as noted below:

- 1) Unconfirmed shark sightings are reports typically from a single individual without any supporting evidence or sightings by another party.

Actions Taken: Lifeguards continue to monitor the area and determine if other sources can confirm or deny the reported sighting.

- 2) Confirmed shark sightings are reports from an individual that is confirmed by multiple individuals, a lifeguard or other public safety representative.

Actions Taken: Lifeguards post the beach area up to one mile in each direction of the sighting with advisory signs indicating that a shark has been sighted. Lifeguards continue to monitor the area and the posted signs remain in place until the area is re-evaluated the following morning. If additional shark sightings are confirmed the next day, the advisory signs remain in place until the area is re-evaluated the following morning. This process will continue until the shark is no longer seen in the area.

- 3) Non-fatal shark incidents are when a shark is reported as having aggressive behavior (bumping, circling, rushing) near swimmers or when it causes an injury to a person.

Actions Taken: Lifeguards clear the ocean waters and post signs one mile in each direction for up to 24 hours. Lifeguards continue to monitor the area and re-evaluate the situation to determine when to open the areas.

- 4) Fatal shark incidents are when a shark has caused the death of a person.

Actions Taken: Lifeguards clear the ocean waters and post signs one mile in each direction for up to 48 hours. Lifeguards continue to monitor the area and re-evaluate the situation to determine when to open the areas.

OC Lifeguards has been in close contact with lifeguard agencies in North Orange County who run successful JG programs and who have been experiencing shark sightings for years. We have also consulted with shark experts who have been studying shark populations and their behavior. We have learned that a large majority of the white sharks being sighted off SoCal beaches are juveniles which are largely averse to human encounters. Scientists have learned that these sharks migrate great distances between Baja California and Central California, looking for ideal environments where safety from larger prey and their favorite food supply of fish and rays are present. Scientists like world renowned shark expert Dr. Chris Lowe from CSULB Shark Lab, have been conducting research and tagging/tracking juvenile white sharks off Southern California since 1996. In light of the recent population being sighted off Capo Beach, OC Lifeguards has provided its staff and personal watercraft in collaboration with State Parks Lifeguards to assist Dr. Chris Lowe with tagging juvenile white sharks and installing sonic

tracking devices on off shore buoys to further the understanding of these sharks' behavior and migration. OC Lifeguards is remaining in close contact with Dr. Chris Lowe to help us better understand these animals. See the following link for more info on white shark research:

<https://www.facebook.com/CSULBSharkLab>

<http://www.csulb.edu/natural-sciences-mathematics-biological-sciences/explore/shark-lab>

<https://futureoftheocean.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/international-partnership-confirms-a-new-baja-nursery-area-for-white-sharks/>

Again, we understand that even with all the information and understanding in the world, our customers may still want to give it a break and cancel their enrollment. OC Junior Guards will offer a voucher that can be utilized for a future session for any customer wishing to cancel their child's enrollment prior to one week before the session due to the shark activity. Please send your refund request through our contact link <http://www.oclg.org/JG/Contact.asp> or call 949.443.0773.

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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