



County of Dare

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Working Together to Enhance Beach Safety Messaging - Text to Join Notification System Provides Updated Beach Conditions

Over the past several months, local officials on the Outer Banks have been working together to develop innovative ways to share beach safety information with residents and visitors.

Expanding the use of social media to deliver quick, focused messages on beach hazards like rip currents, marine life, and shorebreak from a local's perspective, was seen as a way to get information to those that need it most, individuals that may not realize the dangers associated with ocean swimming. Using the catch phrase "Love The Beach Respect The Ocean", CurrentTV developed video public service announcements that feature locals offering tips for staying safe while at the beach. Since Memorial Day these short videos, featuring local lifeguards, surf photographers and pro surfers, including Noah Snyder, Bo Raynor, and Quentin Turko, have been shared on social media and air on Charter Spectrum Cable encouraging everyone to "Live like a local - love the beach, respect the ocean." [To view the PSAs, click here.](#)

In addition, frequent tweets and other social media posts are shared by Dare County, the National Park Service (Cape Hatteras National Seashore), various towns, and rescue squads using the hashtag #LoveTheBeachRespectTheOcean.

Knowing that easy access to beach forecasts and conditions is often challenging, especially for Outer Banks visitors, Dare County Emergency Management explored using the County's Alert and Notification System to send National Weather Service Alerts and beach condition reports from local ocean rescue services to anyone that wants them on their mobile device.

On July 3, Emergency Management established a text to join group allowing anyone to subscribe by simply texting "**Join OBXBeachConditions**" to **30890**. Subscribers will receive beach related NWS Alerts issued 24 hours a day for the Outer Banks. Users will also receive condition reports posted by ocean rescue personnel. In addition to text to join, anyone can sign up for Dare County Alerts and Notifications at www.darenc.com/emergencyalerts.

Drew Pearson, Dare County's Emergency Management Director said, "The safety of our residents and visitors is priority number one. Using our County's alerting system to get people the information they need to make informed decisions on beach hazards just made sense. We want everyone to enjoy our beautiful beaches without being overtaken by the ocean's unforgiving power. I encourage everyone to respect that power by checking conditions before heading out - always swim near a lifeguard and never enter the ocean when red flags are flying."

To access the updated beach forecast from the National Weather Service, visit <https://www.weather.gov/beach/mhx> and click on the umbrella for your area.

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Land of Beginnings