

Some Parent Information on Senior Week at Ocean City

The following is information from the Ocean City Police Department as discussed at the HC DrugFree presentation on Ocean City Senior Week held on January 27, 2004 at Oakland Mills High School:

PARENTS: PREPARING YOUR TEEN FOR A TRIP TO OCEAN CITY

1. Talk to your kids. Discuss your concerns and expectations for their good choices and responsible behavior.
2. Know where they are going to stay. Have input where they will stay. Pick a place from the approved list provided by the Visitor's Center. Know the address and phone number.
3. Who will they be staying with? Responsible roommates encourage responsible behavior.
4. Chaperone. Consider staying in Ocean City the same week, not necessarily the same room or place.
5. Do they have the essentials? Cell phone, emergency contact phone numbers, money management plan.
6. Check on them. Call the hotel or rental manager. Insist that the teen check in with you.
7. Don't provide alcohol!
8. Make sure healthy recreational activities are planned. Use the Play It Safe Booklet.
9. Health information - send a notarized form that they may be treated medically. Send all medical insurance information and doctor's numbers in a size that they can fit in their wallets.

GOOD IDEAS FOR TEENS AND PARENTS TO CHECK OUT:

1. The www.playitsafeoceancity.com website gives info for parents and teens, and a calendar of free activities and coupons. Coupon booklets should be available in the schools in May before Ocean City Week.
2. Two other websites with more very good information are www.ocmaryland.com and www.ococean.com.
3. **1-800-OCOCEAN** Call and get an approved list of seasonal rentals (The police don't make frequent visits to the establishments listed.)
4. Ocean City provides shuttle bus service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! No need to drive and find parking spaces! It costs \$2 per day for unlimited rides and runs on the Coastal Highway from 1st to 145th Streets every 10 minutes from 6 am-noon, every 5-7 minutes from noon-3 am, and every 20 minutes from 3-6 am. There is a Boardwalk tram from the inlet to about 28th Street that costs \$2.50 each, running 10 am-midnight only.

THINGS YOUR TEEN SHOULD KNOW:

The entire Ocean City community works together to enforce underage drinking laws, enlisting the support of alcohol establishments, the lodging industry, and the Beach Patrol, as well as the police.

1. There are lots of plainclothes officers patrolling Ocean City, as well as uniformed officers. They pose as clerks, customers and tourists.
2. No booze on the beach or in public places.
3. If you're under 21 and you drive with ANY alcohol in your system - even less than one beer - you can lose your driver's license for at least 6 months. The .08 percent level does not apply to those under 21. Like drinking? You'll love walking. There is a zero tolerance for anyone under 21 to possess or consume alcohol, whether driving or not. You can be arrested anywhere, including private residences.
4. When someone under 21 is arrested for DUI/DWI there is a second citation issued for underage drinking. This will mean a Motor Vehicle Administration hearing for driver's license suspension, as well as a the regular civil court hearing on the DUI/DWI and underage drinking. If convicted, there are fines, community service, mandatory alcohol education courses (with fees associated), points on driver's license (insurance rates are raised), and an arrest record possible. It is not worth the consequences.
5. Constructive possession means that if your child is in the vicinity of opened alcohol, they will be charged with an alcohol citation.
 - Teens under 18 will have their parents called on the spot. This is a civil offense and will be deferred to the Dept. Of Juvenile Justice in the jurisdiction of residence - Howard County at the courthouse in Ellicott City.
 - Those who are 18 -20 will be handled as adults as a civil offense. A trial date will be set for them to appear before a judge in Ocean City, usually in the Fall - very inconvenient when college is in session.
 - Having possession of a fake or altered ID can result in receiving 12 points on a drivers license, confiscation of the license, and a court date.

6. The beach property rentals work with the police, and many will evict renters if the police are called. End of Beach Week!
7. Use common sense on the beach:
 - Use sunscreen every hour. Lots of Beach Weeks have been ruined with severe sunburns on the first day at the beach. The sand and water reflect the sun more than you think.
 - Be careful body surfing. Lots of head and neck injuries result from body surfing in shallow water.
 - Swimming is allowed on the beaches from 10 am to 5:30 pm.
 - Don't swim alone. Pay attention to the Beach Patrol and lifeguards.

Ocean City Beach Week can be a lot of fun. Make good choices and act responsibly and there will be no problems!