

Okaloosa County News Release

February 10, 2014

Kathy Newby, 850.651.7515, knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us

NR14-19

Lifeguards Patrolling Okaloosa County Beaches March 8

Okaloosa Beach Safety will begin active lifeguard operations on **Saturday, March 9**, and will continue daily from **9 a.m. until 6 p.m.**, now until May 26 (Memorial Day weekend), when time is extended from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. through September 1, 2014 (Labor Day). Lifeguards will continue man the beaches through October 2014.

Other safety features include the [ThorGuard Lightning Prediction System](#) and beach warning flags. Beach flag conditions will be announced daily at 9:00 a.m. Beach Safety lifeguards conduct training throughout the year to maintain their qualifications and preparedness for the summer season. For more information, contact Beach Safety, 850-609-5405 or the Citizens Information Line at 311 (within the county).

Okaloosa County Beach Safety urges everyone to be observant of the warning flags placed along public beaches, swim in front of a lifeguard and make wise choices to be safe in the upcoming summer months. Be aware of hazards and conditions, visit <http://okaloosabeachsafety.org> and follow Beach Safety on Facebook, as well as Twitter @okaloosaguards. Flag conditions and warnings outlined below:

Flag Warnings:

Green flags indicate a low hazard with calm swimming conditions

Yellow flags- medium hazard

Red flag is high hazard; if a **double red** flag is flying, the **water is closed for swimming**.

Purple flags indicate marine pests are present.

[ThorGuard Lightning Prediction System](#): The sensor continuously monitors the atmosphere's electrostatic energy as far away as 15 miles and evaluates the potential for lightning within an area of approximately 2 miles in radius.

- When the system determines a hazardous condition, the **air-horns and strobe lights** provide unmistakable audible and visual alerts.
- When the horns and strobes are activated, **follow the directions of the lifeguards** on the beach and seek shelter in a protected area.
- When the weather passes and the lightning threat dissipates, the horns will sound an "all clear" and the strobes will stop flashing.
- **Continue to follow the directions of lifeguards even after the "all clear" has sounded.**

###