

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 16, 2017
To: Harbor Commission
From: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director
Subject: **Protocols for Posting Shark Advisories on City Beaches**

RECOMMENDATION:

That Harbor Commission receive a staff report on protocols for posting beach advisories when sharks are sighted in City waters.

DISCUSSION:

Increased local white-shark activity over the past four years has prompted the City's Waterfront and Parks and Recreation departments to jointly develop a plan for posting beach advisories when sharks are sighted in nearshore waters. Fortunately, though there have been close calls (sharks biting kayaks and SUPs), nobody has yet been directly attacked in City waters.

The first (and most important) step of the plan, when calls come into City offices, is confirming a shark sighting and its credibility. Where was the shark sighted? Was it sighted from a boat? From shore? Has the reporting party seen sharks before? What did the shark look like? How large was it? How was it behaving? Was a fin observed? How tall was the fin?

Answers to these questions, logged on a Shark Sighting Interview Form, help determine if beach advisories are warranted and where on City beaches advisories should be posted (advisories are typically posted one mile east and one mile west of a credible sighting). The City maintains a list of 18 sites where advisories may be posted, depending on the nature and location of the sighting.

For example, a confirmed shark sighting from a boat of a large shark (over eight feet long) one-half mile off East Beach might warrant posting advisories from the City/County line to Leadbetter Point, while a questionable sighting of a juvenile shark, say six feet long, one mile offshore and observed from Shoreline Park, may not.

The question of "to post or not to post" involves a tricky balance, especially during summer months, when shark sightings are more prevalent (the City has posted beaches 14 times from 2015 to present). It's a matter of public safety, always a priority consideration, versus recreational use of our nearshore waters. On more than one occasion, for example, the Parks and Recreation Department has cancelled Night Moves or Reef and Run events during periods when shark advisories are posted.

In addition, each sighting is different, as are decisions about when and where to post beach advisories, which stay up 48 hours barring another sighting during that period or extenuating circumstances related to the sighting, like a shark behaving aggressively, a nearshore attack on a marine mammal, or an attack on a person or their watercraft. In some cases, a full beach closure may be warranted, though fortunately that step has not yet been necessary.

Attachments: 1. Shark Sighting Interview Form
2. Shark advisory sign—sighting
3. Shark advisory sign—marine mammal attack
4. City beach locations for shark advisories

Prepared by: Mick Kronman, Harbor Operations Manager

City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department

Checklist 1 - Shark Sighting Interview Form

Date:	Temperature	Wave Height:	Weather Conditions
Time:	Air:		Sunny
	Water:	Wave Type	Cloudy
Water Current		Spilling	Foggy
Direction:	Water Conditions	Plunging	Windy
Speed:	Glassy	Surging	Rain
	Choppy	Other	Other
	Murky		
	Visibility		Glare
	Other		Shadows

Witness Info	Witness 1	Witness 2
Name		
Age		
DOB		
Phone Number		
Address		

Can we release your phone number to media and others? Yes No (circle one)

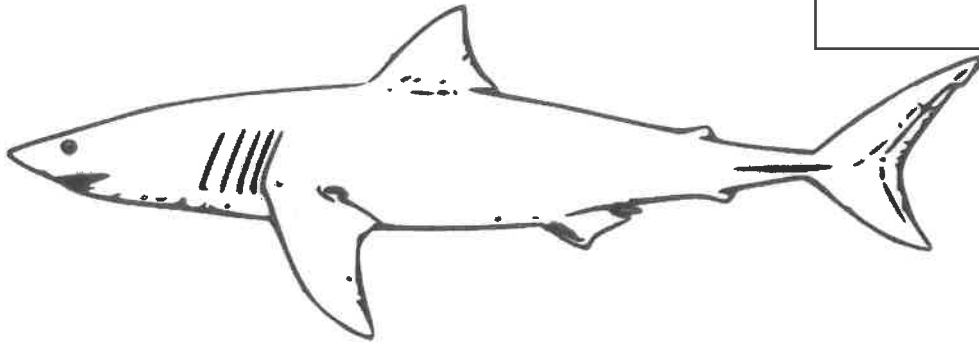
What did you see?		
Have you ever seen a shark before?	Y	N
Did anybody else see the shark?	Y	N
How many sharks did you see?		
When did you see it?		
What color was the Shark?		
Did you see a fin?		
How tall was the fin?		
What was the fin doing?	Side/Side	Up/down
How many fins did you see?		
Did you see a tail fin?	Y	N

What was the distance between the tain fin and dorsal fin?

Exactly where was the shark when you saw it?	
How far away were you from the shark when you saw it?	
How far was the shark from the beach?	
How deep was the water where the shark was sighted?	
Were there any people in the water near the shark?	Number:
Were there any other animals in the water near the shark?	Type and Number:
Was there anything else in the water near the shark?	Kelp Jetsom Flotsom Other:
Which direction was the shark headed?	

Where were you when you saw the shark?
What were you doing when you saw the shark?
How Often do you go to the beach?

Interviewer's Name	Signature	Date
Confirmed Shark Sighting	Yes / No	By: Date



CAUTION!

(PRECAUCION!)

Confirmed Shark Sighting (6/09/17)

**Confirmado, Tiburón en el Área
(6/09/17)**

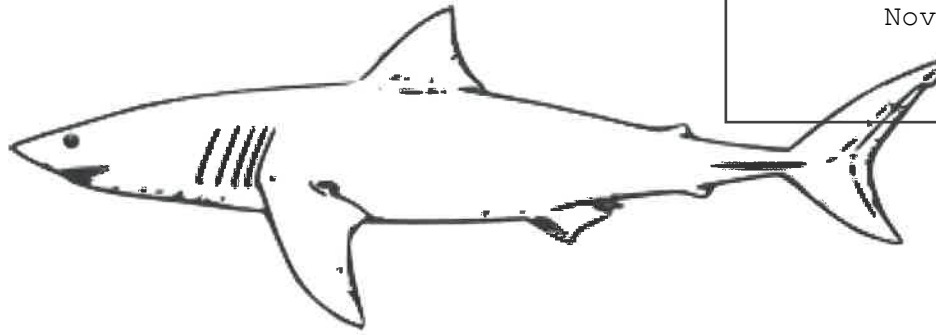
SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK

(Entre al Mar a Su Propio Riesgo)

AVOID MARINE WILDLIFE

(No Se Acerque a Los Animales Marinos)





CAUTION!

¡PRECAUCIÓN!

Confirmed Shark Attack on Marine Mammal
Confirmado, ataque de tiburón a animal marino

____ / ____ / ____

SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK
Entre al mar a su propio riesgo

AVOID MARINE WILDLIFE
No Se Acerque a Los Animales Marinos



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA SHARK ADVISORY POSTING LOCATIONS

- Five (5) City Lifeguard Towers
 - Seasonal Hours of Operation Only: May - September
- East Beach Volleyball Courts
- Cabrillo East Parking Lot (parking fee collection systems)
- Bathhouse Water Quality Sign
- Cabrillo West Parking Lot (parking fee collection systems)
- Chase Palm Park Soccer Field (near Laguna Channel Bridge)
- Stearns Wharf Beach Entry (Eastside of the wharf)
- Stearns Wharf Beach Entry (Westside of the wharf)
- West Beach Volleyball Courts
- Sea Landing
- Launch Ramp Kayak Dock
- Cat Beach
- Leadbetter Beach (between restaurant and bathroom)
- Leadbetter Beach (middle of the park and picnic area)
- Leadbetter Point (shoreline park pathway to the beach)
- Shoreline Park Stairway to the Beach
- Thousand Steps
- Mesa Lane Steps