

MCB Hawaii to Change Recreational Policies

Marine Corps Base Hawaii is home to some of Oahu's most beautiful and recreationally inviting beaches. The policies that have been in place regulating recreational activities have recently been modernized, in an effort to ensure that they can be maximized while still maintaining an appropriate level of safety.

“We simply looked at the existing regulations, and asked how they could be better,” stated Harry Sprague, Water Safety Manager for Marine Corps Community Services, MCB Hawaii. “We found a few areas that could be updated without jeopardizing safety, got input from the base community and the proposals had some really positive reactions,” he furthered.

The primary change in policy deals with authorized patronage. The previous regulation dictated that an authorized cardholder was limited to sponsoring two guests. The new regulation allows authorized patrons to sponsor up to three guests. To sponsor a guest, patrons must be 18 years of age or older.

The next change encompasses the acceptance of pets aboard the beaches. The previous regulation established that dogs are limited to only North Beach during designated hours. The new rule allows dogs aboard every MCB Hawaii beach except from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. daily.

A minor change has been made that deals with using the buddy system when entering the water for any activity. Patrons are still highly encouraged to use the buddy system, however, single patrons are now allowed to enter the water if there are others in the immediate area.

Perhaps a more significant change is the approval to let patrons have 24-hour access to the water. Previously, only scuba diving was allowed after sunset. Patrons can now enjoy nighttime water activities, except for when hazardous conditions exist.

If you have been to Pyramid Rock Beach or North Beach, and seen the signage for the flag systems, you may have been slightly confused. In an effort to simplify the posting of beach conditions, Water Safety has changed the system to mirror notional guidelines and reflect City and County signage, procedures and execution. This means that beachgoers will have the same systems both on, and off-base. When other Oahu beaches with similar conditions to MCB Hawaii's are closed, MCB Hawaii's beaches will close as well.

“We encourage anyone to call Water Safety or stop by a lifeguard stand for any more information,” invited Sprague. The Water Safety number for MCB Hawaii is 254-7655. For further information, visit www.mccshawaii.com.