



OCEAN FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

# Chapter and Club Toolkit





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# Why Do We Need Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels?

Plastics are all around us and a part of our everyday lives. They're also increasingly in our bodies – microplastics have been found in our lungs, blood, reproductive organs, and more. An estimated [11 million tons of plastic](#) enter ocean waters every year, which is the equivalent of a trash truck dumping a full load into our ocean every minute of every day.

So, what's the best way to combat this crisis facing our ocean? It's simple – we need to stop the problem at its source! The Surfrider Foundation's [Ocean Friendly Restaurants \(OFR\)](#) and [Hotels \(OFH\)](#) programs do just that. One business and one customer at a time, participating establishments increase awareness, drive changes in behavior, and ultimately create a scalable impact to reduce our plastic footprint. The program/s also

provide critical business voices, helping Surfrider chapters and clubs pass policies aimed at plastic reduction and showing real-world examples of how these policies can be successfully implemented.

This toolkit is designed to help your Surfrider Chapter or Club launch and grow a successful OFR and OFH Program. This toolkit provides best practices, resources, and is your one-stop shop for all things ocean-friendly. If you have any questions, please reach out to [ofr@surfrider.org](mailto:ofr@surfrider.org) or [ofh@surfrider.org](mailto:ofh@surfrider.org).

In 2025, our Ocean Friendly Restaurants collectively served over 42 million single-use plastic-free meals and our Ocean Friendly Hotels saved 1.4 million plastic bottles and 2 million mini toiletry bottles.



## Our Impact & Counting



**>630**

Ocean Friendly Restaurants



**>37**

Ocean Friendly Hotels



**42 million**

Single-use Plastic-free  
Meals Served Annually



**32**

States with Ocean Friendly  
Businesses



**1.6 million**

Plastic Water Bottles  
Saved Annually



**2.5 million**

Mini Plastic Toiletry Bottles  
Saved Annually



# Programs Overview

Surfrider's OFR and OFH programs highlight businesses that pledge to meet an ocean-friendly standard, based on a comprehensive set of criteria. One of the main goals of the program is to significantly reduce unnecessary plastic waste and promote reusables whenever possible. However, there are other types of pollution and issues impacting the ocean that restaurants and hotels can help address to be truly ocean friendly. Therefore, optional criteria are included to highlight restaurants and hotels that are also working to conserve water and energy, and offer more sustainably-sourced ingredients.

Surfrider's OFR and OFH programs provide businesses with a registration process that has been informed by the top 10 items most commonly found on Surfrider's beach cleanups and developed by a variety of stakeholders. Recognition by the OFR and OFH programs provide businesses with true marketplace value, as members become coastal defenders in their communities through established programs that are clearly recognizable to consumers. OFRs and OFHs pledge to use less plastic and take other steps to help protect our ocean, waves, and beaches.

**Surfrider's OFR and OFH programs provide businesses with a registration process that has been informed by the top 10 items most commonly found on Surfrider's beach cleanups and developed by a variety of stakeholders.**





# Ocean Friendly Restaurants





## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Program Background

Ocean Friendly Restaurants first launched in 2013 with Surfrider's Huntington Beach Chapter. The program quickly expanded throughout Southern California and Hawai'i, becoming a nationally recognized program in 2021. Now the OFR Program operates in 32 states and counting. Throughout the years, the OFR Program has helped to pass many plastic reduction policies and moved the needle on plastic use in the restaurant industry.

In addition, Surfrider leads a [Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants Program \(GLFR\)](#), which is a regional spinoff of the OFR Program. This program was launched in 2020 in response to chapter feedback from the Great Lakes Region. The criteria for this program are the same as OFR, but it has a different name and marketing materials.

### Is there a fee to enroll in the program?

The Ocean Friendly Restaurants Program is **free to join**, although an **optional donation is always appreciated**. In an effort to make the program more accessible to all restaurants, Surfrider removed the mandatory fee in 2021.

All donations are 100% tax-deductible and help to ensure that Surfrider can continue to provide this program free of charge to restaurants across the nation. **Chapters collect 50% of the local restaurant membership donations** to help support chapter efforts. **OFRs can make donations to Surfrider via [this link](#)**. If they would like to donate to a specific chapter, they can do so in the dropdown menu on the right.



## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Program Criteria

### Mandatory Criteria

#### Must Follow All Seven

1. Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.<sup>1</sup>
2. Paper straws are provided only upon request.<sup>2</sup>
3. No expanded polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam™) is used.
4. No plastic bags are used for takeout orders.
5. Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request for takeout and to-go orders.
6. Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
7. Proper recycling practices are followed.

Check out Surfrider's [OFR Quick Guide](#) to learn more about the program requirements.

### Optional Criteria

#### Choose a Minimum of Three

1. A discount is offered for customers with a reusable item (e.g. cup, container, or bag).
2. Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered regularly.
3. All seafood is "Best Choice" or "Good Alternative" as defined by Seafood Watch, or certified as sustainable.<sup>3</sup>
4. Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.<sup>4</sup>
5. Energy efficiency efforts are in place.<sup>5</sup>
6. Concessions and pre-packaged food items are not sold in plastic packaging.
7. Composting efforts are in place for food waste.
8. Neither single-use plastic nor bio-based plastic containers are used for takeout or to-go orders, reusable containers are preferred.

**Restaurants that meet all of the criteria are recognized as **Platinum Level Ocean Friendly Restaurants!****



<sup>1</sup> Foodware includes dinnerware, drinkware, silverware, and ramekins/containers.

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions may be made for naturally occurring materials (e.g. hay, bamboo) and reusables (e.g. metal, glass), not including bio-based plastic. Straws should be provided to anyone who needs one, including people with disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> Locally sourced, sustainable seafood is preferred and should be prioritized when Seafood Watch recommendations do not apply.

<sup>4</sup> Examples include installing low-flow faucets and toilets, offering drinking water upon request only, no hosing down outside to reduce urban runoff, proper disposal of FOG, and up-to-date septic or sewage to prevent wastewater pollution.

<sup>5</sup> Examples include switching to LED lighting, installing solar panels, using Energy Star certified appliances and/or other efforts to use less energy.



## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Beyond Traditional Restaurants

### Food Trucks

Food trucks and small restaurants with six or less tables can still be registered as Ocean Friendly if all takeout and foodservice items do not contain plastic or bioplastic (see [Surfrider's Bioplastic Facts & Resources](#)) and utensils and other to-go ware is composed of natural materials that can biodegrade in the natural environment (eg. wood, bamboo, or paper,). In addition, any drinks sold must be in glass, canned, or in other naturally occurring materials (See Surfrider's most up-to-date [Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) for more info on alternatives).

Food trucks are encouraged to utilize reusable items where possible and to minimize packaging for their food.

### Bars

There has been recurring interest in wine tasting rooms, bars, and taverns that serve a very limited menu (or in some cases, no food at all) to become Ocean Friendly. Bars or wine tasting rooms that don't serve food can still be registered as Ocean Friendly if there is no single-use plastic used, which means no plastic cups, no plastic straws or stirrers, and no plastic beverage bottles offered for sale.

### Schools

School cafeterias and other facilities are eligible to be registered if they meet the same criteria as restaurants. We have many student clubs that have worked to make their [dining halls](#) Ocean Friendly!





## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Getting Started

### Process Overview

1. Identify volunteers to recruit restaurants.
2. Recruit restaurants and provide resources to transition away from single-use plastic.
3. Compliant restaurants sign up via online form at [Surfrider.org/OFR](https://surfrider.org/OFR).
4. Restaurant is featured on map and receives window decal and access to other program benefits.
5. Compliance check within 1 year of membership.
6. Restaurant renews annually via the online form.
7. Repeat steps 3-5.



### Steps to Build Your OFR Program

1. **Identify a leader or committee** to manage the Ocean Friendly Restaurants Programs. This person(s) will be in charge of recruiting and retaining restaurants.
2. **Review this toolkit** and all of the materials available on the [OFR ChapterNet page](#) (password: gosurf).
3. **Order brochures and other marketing assets.** The OFR Brand Portal is full of leave-behinds you can take with you while you recruit restaurants or host events. The brand portal also includes social media templates and digital marketing tools. Some chapters bring brochures as well as sustainable, product-alternative samples for restaurants to see and feel! This is a great way to promote our exclusive [vendor discounts](#).
4. **Create a target list of potential OFRs** in your area and keep track of it with your chapter. Start with businesses that are meeting some of the criteria already or seem to be “low-hanging fruit,” like vegetarian or waterfront restaurants, and restaurants that aren’t too reliant on takeout items. See our [OFR Eligibility Requirements](#) page for ideas. Use Yelp or Google Reviews to scout out a restaurant’s plastic use without having to visit in person!
5. **Host OFR subcommittee meetings** quarterly, bi-monthly, or monthly to organize locally. It could be an Ocean Friendly Programs specific meeting, or it could be a breakout session during or after a general Surfrider chapter or club meeting. Host Chapter Meetings at prospective OFRs. This will show support with your dollars and is a great way to introduce the restaurant to the chapter and the program.
6. **Recruit!** At this point, you know how the program works, you have volunteers, printed program materials, and are ready to sign up businesses! You can start by emailing, calling, or DMing on social media your list of businesses, but you will have the most success by visiting in person. Try to avoid the meal rush or busy season when doing in-person outreach. Running a restaurant is long and hard work, so don’t be discouraged if you don’t get a reply right away — persistence pays off! When visiting in person, you can take the program brochure and any other materials with you. Ask the owner/manager for their contact info to follow up.

# Recruitment Resources

We have plenty of [resources to help you recruit](#) restaurants that can all be found on the OFR ChapterNet Page.

[Go to Chapternet](#) (password: gosurf)

**Introduction Letter for Restaurants:** This is a letter that you can email or print and give to a prospective Ocean Friendly Restaurant. It provides an overview of the OFR program and is customizable for your local chapter to add info about restaurant items collected at local beach cleanups. [View Here](#)

**Pitch to Restaurants:** This is a script that you can use when recruiting restaurants in person. This resource is just a guide and can be tailored to fit your chapter and personality. [View Here](#)

**Quick Guide For Restaurants:** A two-sided guide provides easy ideas on ways to meet the OFR criteria. [View Here](#)

**OFR Brochure:** This brochure provides an overview of the program, benefits, and how to join. [View Here](#)

**Paper Membership Form** (scroll to the bottom): If a restaurant wants to sign up but doesn't want to take the time to fill out the online form, they can fill out this paper membership form, and someone from the chapter can complete the online form for them. [View Here](#)

**OFR Benefits Folder:** Explore this folder to see one-pagers explaining the business benefits of joining the OFR/GLFR program. [View Here](#)

**OFR Case Studies** (scroll to the bottom): To showcase how our Ocean Friendly Restaurants have saved money. [View Here](#)

**Pro Tip:** A great way to help launch your OFR program is with a “[strawless](#)” or “[skip the stuff](#)” challenge. The premise is to encourage restaurants to give up plastic straws, or to offer straws and accessory items “by request only” for a period of time, such as a week or a month. Ask them to estimate their straw usage before and during the challenge and highlight the best straw reductions online. After the challenge, ask each restaurant to sign up as an Ocean Friendly Restaurant once they see how beneficial and easy it is.





# OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

## Track Your OFRs

There are a few ways to track the list of Ocean Friendly Restaurants currently active in your chapter.

The main [OFR webpage](#) features an interactive map that displays restaurants currently active in the program.

Your chapter's OFR webpage displays restaurants currently active in the program AND in your area. This is a more digestible version of the larger map.

The best way to track active and expired restaurants is on [Surfrider's Hubspot Dashboard](#). This comprehensive resource shows OFRs that are assigned to your chapter in real time with reports that show active OFRs, expired OFRs, and OFRs that expire this month. You can also access OFR contact info and the custom renewal links. To access this dashboard you need a Hubspot account. Please email [helpdesk@surfrider.org](mailto:helpdesk@surfrider.org) and CC your regional manager to get set up.

**Active OFRs** ⓘ  
⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFR COUNT  
**91**

**Expired OFRs** ⓘ  
⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFR COUNT  
**109**

**OFRs Expiring This Month** ⓘ  
⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFR COUNT  
**3**

**Active Ocean Friendly Restaurants** ⓘ  
⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

| OFR NAME ⌵                  | CITY ⌵    | MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION ⌵ | PLATINUM? ⌵ | BEVERAGES NOT SOLD IN PLASTIC BOTTLES ⌵ |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Sally's Waterfront Dining   | San Diego | 11/8/2025               | No          | Yes                                     |
| Malibu Farm Seaport Village | San Diego | 11/14/2025              | No          | Yes                                     |

**Ocean Friendly Restaurants Expiring This Month** ⓘ  
⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

| OFR NAME ⌵                | CITY ⌵    | MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION ⌵ | PLATINUM? ⌵ | BEVERAGES NOT SOLD IN PLASTIC BOTTLES ⌵ | NO EX POS US |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------|
| Herb & Sea                | Encinitas | 11/4/2025               | No          | Yes                                     | Ye           |
| Sally's Waterfront Dining | San Diego | 11/8/2025               | No          | Yes                                     | Ye           |

## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Compliance

It is very important that restaurants follow the Ocean Friendly Restaurants Program criteria. If Ocean Friendly Restaurants are noncompliant, this could jeopardize the legitimacy and impact of the program. Arrange to conduct a compliance check of every restaurant that you register within the one-year membership. It's great to contact restaurants online or on the phone, but to create a stronger relationship and verify their compliance with the criteria, it is important to visit each restaurant in person. Plus, it's a great opportunity to get a photo at the end of the process!

If you receive a report of noncompliance or think there may be noncompliance, please contact the restaurant staff to inquire or visit the restaurant. Warn the restaurant staff if you spot a violation, and then we will revoke their OFR status if needed.

If a restaurant continues to be noncompliant after your chapter or club has contacted the restaurant about it, please email HQ at [ofr@surfrider.org](mailto:ofr@surfrider.org) so the restaurant can be removed from national and local Surfrider websites and maps. The restaurant will be asked to take down any collateral including window stickers, brochures, and table toppers.

We have plenty of resources to help you with noncompliance that can all be found on the OFR [ChapterNet Page](#) (password: gosurf). If you need help or have questions, email [ofr@surfrider.org](mailto:ofr@surfrider.org).

**Compliance Checklist:** Use this checklist to guide your compliance check. No need to send this to anyone at HQ, just keep this for your records. [View Here](#)

**Noncompliance Letter:** Use this template as a gentle reminder if one of the OFRs in your chapter is not complying with the criteria. [View Here](#)

**Bioplastic Facts and Resources Webpage:** Our one-stop shop with all of Surfrider's bioplastics facts and resources to help you and restaurants learn more about why bioplastic is a false solution. [View Here](#)

**Pro Tip:** Refer to the latest version of Surfrider's [Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) and provide samples of sustainable vendors. This is a great time to show them our exclusive [vendor discounts!](#)





## OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

# Registration & Renewal

### How to Register

There are two main ways for restaurants to signup, whether we contact them or they contact us.

Restaurants can finalize the enrollment process and make an optional donation on the OFR webpage ([Surfrider.org/ofr](https://surfrider.org/ofr) --> [Sign-up form](#)).

We also have a physical membership form for Ocean Friendly Restaurants on our [Brand Portal](#) (scroll to the bottom). Restaurant managers or owners can fill out this form and the chapter's OFR lead can complete the online registration using the information provided in the paper form.

When the enrollment process is complete, the restaurant will get an instant welcome email. Their complimentary window sticker can be expected in two to four weeks. If they would like additional marketing materials such as table tents or website badges, they can order them on the [brand portal](#). This brand portal is included in the welcome email.

### How to Renew

Every year, OFRs need to renew their membership. The best way to ensure that your restaurants renew each year is to have consistent contact with them during their membership and celebrate their commitment throughout the year. Each contact associated with an OFR gets a custom renewal form that they can use to renew very easily once their membership is nearing expiration. Surfrider Headquarters will send out two automated renewal emails to OFR's with expiring memberships. The first email will go out two weeks before the restaurant's membership expiration date. The second email will go out one day after expiration. Each email will have the contact's customized renewal form featured. Once a restaurant renews, they will receive a confirmation email just like they did when they joined the program for the first time.

Since most restaurants need a little extra nudging to renew, we've included the custom renewal form in the Hubspot Dashboard listed above so you can send them to OFR contacts as well. This custom form has the restaurant's name, contact info, and criteria. See our [Renewal Guidance Document](#) or reach out to [ofr@surfrider.org](mailto:ofr@surfrider.org) with any questions.



# Ocean Friendly Hotels





## OCEAN FRIENDLY HOTELS

# Program Background

The [Ocean Friendly Hotels](#) program is an expansion of Surfrider's nationally-recognized Ocean Friendly Restaurants program and is inspired by chapter activism. Surfrider chapters have worked closely with hotels through campaigns, local programs, and community collaborations for years. The Kaua'i Chapter spearheaded a local Ocean Friendly Visitors Program, and the Maui Chapter led Rise Above Plastics on Vacation, encouraging hotels and visitors to reduce their single-use plastic use.

In New York and Washington, our chapters successfully campaigned to ban mini toiletry bottles statewide.

We started the Ocean Friendly Hotels program to showcase even more businesses that are turning the tide on plastic pollution and passing more plastic reduction policies. In addition, we lead a [Great Lakes Friendly Hotels](#) program to support chapters and clubs in the region.



# Program Criteria

## Mandatory Criteria<sup>1</sup>

### Must Follow All Seven

1. No plastic beverage bottles or plastic bags are sold or used onsite (this does not include trash bags).
2. No expanded polystyrene is used anywhere onsite (aka Styrofoam).
3. Cups, utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items in rooms are reusable or made from naturally occurring materials and are not packaged in plastic.<sup>2</sup>
4. Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, or lotion) are not packaged in small plastic bottles.<sup>3</sup>
5. Water refill stations are available for guests onsite.
6. If applicable, restaurants or cafes onsite are Surfrider Ocean Friendly Restaurants.<sup>4</sup>
7. Proper solid waste recycling procedures are followed and bins are amply provided for guest use.



## Optional Criteria

### Choose a Minimum of Three

1. Coffee and tea stations do not use single-use pods or plastic packaging in rooms.<sup>5</sup>
2. Concessions and pre-packaged food items are not sold or distributed in plastic packaging, including in-room mini bars.
3. Room keys are reusable or made from naturally occurring materials.
4. Energy efficiency efforts are in place.<sup>6</sup> At a minimum, rooms must have signage that reminds guests to turn off lights when leaving their rooms.
5. Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.<sup>7</sup> At a minimum, rooms must have signage which asks guests to consider using their towels and linens more than once.
6. Inspired by Surfrider Kauai Chapter's Ocean Friendly Visitors Program, solo trash cleanup kits are available for guests.
7. Onsite gift shops only sell or provide sunscreen that is reef friendly.<sup>8</sup>
8. Outdoor light pollution is minimized.<sup>9</sup>
9. Hotel landscaping follows Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Garden Program criteria or there is an Ocean Friendly Garden onsite.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding these mandatory criteria, the Surfrider Foundation maintains full discretion to exclude a hotel for any reason, including that a hotel's facility and/or operations violate Surfrider Foundation's mission or any one of its five primary initiatives. While the Ocean Friendly Hotels program is primarily focused on reducing plastic pollution, if a hotel property conflicts with any Surfrider initiative, including but not limited to Surfrider's [coasts and climate initiative](#), [beach preservation policy](#), [beach access](#), and [policy on artificial reefs](#), Surfrider in its sole discretion may exclude the hotel from the program, at any time.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of acceptable alternatives include naturally occurring materials (e.g. hay, bamboo, or paper) and reusables (e.g. metal or glass), not including bio-based plastic.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of acceptable alternatives include reusable containers that can be mounted on the wall or placed on the counter, or bar soap wrapped in paper.

<sup>4</sup> See [here](#) for requirements. Even though the OFR Program allows plastic for takeout only, the OFH program does not allow single-use plastic cups to be used in waterfront or beach bars. Review our [Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) to learn about greenwashing, product alternatives, and creative ways to implement more reusables in your restaurants.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of acceptable alternatives include sourcing local coffee grounds or loose leaf tea packaged in paper or aluminum with a drip coffee maker or French press. Machines that require pods should use the reusable kind or hotels can offer complimentary coffee in the lobby.

<sup>6</sup> Examples include switching to LED lighting, motion sensor lighting, installing solar panels, using Energy Star certified appliances, updating insulation on windows and doors, and providing group shuttles to airports and attractions.

<sup>7</sup> Examples include installing low-flow faucets, toilets, washing machines & dishwashers, no hosing down outside to reduce urban runoff, and up-to-date septic or sewage to prevent wastewater pollution.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of active ingredients to avoid in sunscreen are Oxybenzone, Octinoxate, Nanoparticles or "nano-sized" zinc or titanium, and any form of microplastic, such as "exfoliating beads." See [Surfrider's guide](#) for more information.

<sup>9</sup> Examples include installing shielded lights, warm colored lights, lights with lower lumens, motion sensor or timed lighting, and lights mounted as low as possible. See [DarkSky International](#) for resources about light pollution and their [DarkSky Approved programs](#).

<sup>10</sup> See [here](#) for requirements. Hotel grounds with golf courses are not eligible for this optional criteria.



## OCEAN FRIENDLY HOTELS

# Finding the Right Fit

### Best Fit

- Hotels that are good community partners with positive experience from the chapter (have hosted beach cleanups, have donated to the chapter, have Ocean Friendly Restaurants, or an Ocean Friendly Garden)
- Small to midsize hotels with one to six locations.
- Boutique hotels or bed and breakfasts.

### Not the Best Fit

- Airbnbs
- Massive skyscraper hotels that are right on the beach.
- Hotel chain with over 10 locations.
- Hotels that are actively opposing campaigns or policies that the Surfrider chapter is working on, such as a beach access campaign, single-use plastic ordinance, or are expanding/ installing a hard armoring project (seawall or breakwater).



# Getting Started

## Process Overview

1. Identify volunteers to recruit hotels.
2. Talk to hotels and provide resources and support to transition away from single-use plastic.
3. Compliant hotels sign up via online form at [surfrider.org/OFH](http://surfrider.org/OFH) and pay the small fee.
4. Hotel is featured on map and gets access to OFH benefits.
5. Compliance check within 1 year membership
6. Hotel renews after the 1 year membership is up via online form.
7. Repeat steps 3-5.



## Steps to Build Your OFH Program

1. **Start by identifying a leader or committee** to manage the Ocean Friendly Hotels Programs. This person(s) will be in charge of recruiting and retaining hotels. If your chapter already has an Ocean Friendly Restaurant coordinator — they can work together or work on both!
2. **Review this toolkit** and all of the materials available on the [OFH ChapterNet page](#) (password: gosurf).
3. **Order brochures and other marketing assets.**  
The [OFH Brand Portal](#) is full of leave-behinds you can take with you while you recruit hotels or host events. The Brand Portal also includes social media templates and digital marketing tools. Some chapters bring brochures as well as sustainable, product-alternative samples for restaurants and hotels to see and feel! This is a great way to promote our exclusive [vendor discounts](#).
4. **Host OFH subcommittee meetings** quarterly, bi-monthly, or monthly to organize locally. It could be an Ocean Friendly Programs specific meeting, or it could be a breakout session during or after a general Surfrider chapter meeting.
5. **Create a target list of potential OFHs** in your area and keep track of it with your chapter. Start with businesses that are meeting some of the criteria already or seem to be “low-hanging fruit,” like small boutique hotels, surf lodges, or hotels that already have an OFR onsite. See our [OFH Eligibility Requirements](#) page for ideas. Use Google Reviews or the hotel website to scout out their plastic use without having to visit in person! Usually customers include photos of the rooms and bathrooms in their review, which is helpful for seeing if they use mini toiletry bottles or not!
6. **Recruit!** At this point, you know how the program works, you have volunteers, printed program materials, and are ready to sign up businesses! You can start by emailing or calling your list of businesses, but you will have the most success by visiting in person. Try to avoid the busy season when doing in-person outreach. Running a hotel is long and hard work so don't be discouraged if you don't get a reply right away — persistence pays off! When visiting in person, you can take the program brochure and any other materials with you. Ask the owner/manager for their contact info to follow up.



# Recruitment Resources

We have plenty of [resources to help you recruit](#) hotels that can all be found on the OFH ChapterNet Page.

[Go to Chapternet](#) (password: gosurf)

**Introduction Letter for Hotels:** This is a letter that you can email or print and give to a prospective Ocean Friendly Hotel. It provides an overview of the OFH program and is customizable for your local chapter.

[View Here](#)

**OFH One-Pager:** This one-pager sums up the program and criteria. [View Here](#)

**Quick Guide For Hotels:** A two-sided guide provides easy ideas on ways to meet the OFH criteria. [View Here](#)

**OFH Brochure:** This brochure provides an overview of the program, benefits, and how to join. [View Here](#)

**Pro Tip:** A great way to help launch your OFH program is to start with recruiting their restaurant (if there is one onsite) to be Ocean Friendly. This helps to build a relationship with food and beverage staff so that you can pitch the hotel's program once that relationship is established. Additionally, many hotel brands have staff members dedicated to sustainability. You can also attend local tourism association meetings and events — which happen all over the country!



## OCEAN FRIENDLY HOTELS

# Track Your OFHs

There are a few ways to track the list of Ocean Friendly Hotels currently active in your chapter.

The main [OFH webpage](#) features an interactive map that displays restaurants currently active in the program.

Surfrider staff can also create an OFH webpage to display on your chapter website. This will only show OFHs in your region. Reach out to [ofh@surfrider.org](mailto:ofh@surfrider.org) for questions.

The best way to track active and expired restaurants is on [Surfrider's Hubspot Dashboard](#). This comprehensive resource shows OFHs that are assigned to your chapter in real time with reports that show active OFHs, expired OFHs, and OFHs that expire this month. You can also access OFH contact info and the custom renewal links. To access this dashboard you need a Hubspot account. Please email [helpdesk@surfrider.org](mailto:helpdesk@surfrider.org) and CC your regional manager to get set up.

### Active OFHs ⓘ

⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFH COUNT

4

### Expired OFHs ⓘ

⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFH COUNT

0

### OFHs Expiring This Month ⓘ

⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

OFH COUNT

0

### Active Ocean Friendly Hotels ⓘ

⚠ Dashboard filters are applied to this report. ⓘ

| OFH NAME ↕             | CITY ↕     | MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION ↕ | PLATINUM? ↕ | NO PLASTIC BOTTLES OR BAGS SOLD/USED ↕ | NO EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE USE |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Shelburne Hotel        | Seaview    | 10/9/2026               | No          | Yes                                    | Yes                         |
| Boardwalk Cottages     | Long Beach | 10/9/2026               | No          | Yes                                    | Yes                         |
| Inn at Discovery Coast | Long Beach | 10/9/2026               | No          | Yes                                    | Yes                         |

### Ocean Friendly Hotels Expiring This Month ⓘ



There is no data to show in this time frame. Try changing the date range.



## OCEAN FRIENDLY HOTELS

# Compliance

It is very important that hotels are following the Ocean Friendly Hotels Program criteria. If Ocean Friendly Hotels are noncompliant, this could jeopardize the legitimacy and impact of the program. Arrange to conduct a compliance check of every hotel that you register within the one-year membership. It's great to contact hotels online or on the phone, but to create a stronger relationship and verify their compliance with the criteria, it is important to visit each hotel in person. Plus, it's a great opportunity to get a photo at the end of the process!

If you receive a report of noncompliance or think there may be noncompliance, please contact the hotel staff to inquire or visit the hotel. Warn the hotel staff if you spot a violation, then we will revoke their OFH status if needed.

We have plenty of resources to help you with noncompliance that can all be found on the OFR [ChapterNet Page](#) (password: gosurf). If at any point you need help or have questions, email [ofh@surfrider.org](mailto:ofh@surfrider.org).

**Compliance Checklist:** Use this checklist to guide your compliance check. No need to send this to anyone at HQ, just keep this in your records. [View Here](#)

**Noncompliance Letter:** Use this template as a gentle reminder if one of the OFR's in your chapter is not complying with the criteria. If a hotel continues to be non-compliant, please email HQ at [ofh@surfrider.org](mailto:ofh@surfrider.org) so the hotel can be removed from national and local Surfrider websites and maps. The hotel will be asked to take down any collateral. [View Here](#)

**Bioplastic Facts and Resources Webpage:** Our one stop shop with all of Surfrider's bioplastics facts and resources to help you and restaurants learn more about why bioplastic is a false solution. [View Here](#)

**Pro Tip:** Refer to the latest version of Surfrider's [Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) and provide samples of sustainable vendors. This is a great time to show them our exclusive [vendor discounts](#)!



# Registration & Renewal

## How to Register

There is one main way hotels can signup, whether we contact them or they contact us.

Hotels can finalize the enrollment process and pay the required annual fee on the OFH webpage:

[Surfrider.org/OFH](https://surfrider.org/OFH) --> [Learn More](#) --> [Sign-up form](#)

## Annual Hotel Fee

A small fee is required to join the Ocean Friendly Hotels Program. The program fee is based on the size of the hotel and the local chapter receives 50% of the payment.

- Very small (Less than 10 rooms): \$150
- Small (11-25 rooms): \$275
- Medium (26-100 rooms): \$450
- Large (101-300 rooms): \$625
- Very large (301 rooms & above): \$800

An Ocean Friendly Hotel membership is good for one year and requires annual renewal. When the enrollment process is complete, the hotel will get an instant welcome email and access to exclusive marketing materials such as signage, table tents, website badges, and more that they can order on the [brand portal](#).

## How to Renew

Every year, OFHs need to renew their membership. The best way to ensure that your Ocean Friendly Hotels renew each year is to have consistent contact with them during their membership and celebrate their commitment throughout the year.

Each contact associated with an OFH gets a custom renewal form that they can use to renew very easily once their membership is expiring. Surfrider Headquarters will send out two automated renewal emails to OFHs with expiring memberships. The first email will go out two weeks before the restaurant's membership expiration date. The second email will go out one day after expiration. Each email will have the contact's customized renewal form featured. Once a hotel renews, they will receive a confirmation email just like they did when they joined the program for the first time.

Since most hotels need a little extra nudging to renew, we've included the custom renewal form in the Hubspot Dashboard listed above so you can send them to OFH contacts as well. This custom form has the restaurant's name, contact info, and criteria. See our [Renewal Guidance Document](#) or reach out to [ofh@surfrider.org](mailto:ofh@surfrider.org) with any questions.





# FAQs & Best Practices



# Program Benefits

Besides keeping plastic out of the ocean and reducing their environmental impact, OFRs and OFHs gain access to an array of exciting benefits!

## Here are a few you can reference in your outreach:

- OFR/OFH Marketing Collateral
- OFRs receive a complimentary window decal in the mail
- Use of OFR/OFH logo
- Listed on Surfrider websites and featured in regular blog spotlights
- Included on OFR/OFH national and chapter map
- Launch parties and collaborative promotions
- Social media marketing promotion
- National vendor discounts
- Tax-deductible contribution opportunity
- Association with a nationally recognized nonprofit with thousands of members and supporters working hard to keep our ocean healthy and protected!





# Strengthening Your Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels Program

At this point, you already have an established Ocean Friendly Restaurants or Hotels program and want to strengthen your relationship with participating businesses and grow your program. This may include posting on social media, hosting events, launching a fundraiser, or pitching a local news story about the program. We have a ton of resources to help you take your program to the next level.

## Events

Events are a great way to recruit volunteers and increase awareness about the program. Here are some event ideas from our chapters:

**Host an Ocean Friendly “Happy Hour” or [Pau Hana](#)** at a participating restaurant or hotel to spread the word about the program and promote our business partners. Work with the owner or manager to prepare drink and appetizer specials.

**Lead an [OFR Blitz](#)** and gather multiple volunteers in a walkable area with many restaurants to chat with multiple restaurants in one day. Think of it as an OFR restaurant crawl. Bring brochures and helpful resources with you.

**Host a movie screening at an OFR or OFH!** This can be a fun and educational event with a panel discussion at the end.

**Host your chapter or club meeting at an existing OFR or OFH** to show your support! See if the manager would be willing to say a few words about why they decided to join the program.

Every year, Surfrider hosts Ocean Friendly Business Month, a month where all chapters and clubs are encouraged to host an Ocean Friendly Business-inspired event during the month. This is an opportunity for collective celebration across the Surfrider network. We typically host this during the entire month of October every year.

## Social Media

Show your participating businesses love on your chapter’s social media pages! We have plenty of graphics on our [OFR](#) and [OFH](#) brand portals that highlight the program criteria or templates to spotlight your own OFRs and OFHs.

## Fundraising

OFRs and OFHs are always looking for new and exciting ways to collaborate with Surfrider chapters and clubs. Some common ways our chapters have teamed up with participating businesses to raise money are:

### **Working with an OFR or OFH to sponsor a special event.**

For example: the business covers the cost or provide food for a post-cleanup happy hour. Or maybe your chapter or club has an existing event in mind that you need help fundraising for. Offer to co-collaborate on a social media post or include the event in your newsletter.

**Run a fundraising promotion on a specific menu item.** For example: “For every Surfrider Spritz Cocktail served, we will donate \$1 to Surfrider.” The duration, specific terms, and unique marketing are determined between the chapter or club and the restaurant.

**Work with a hotel to get a percentage of proceeds from room bookings or sales.** This can be ongoing, for a period of time, or on a key date (like World Ocean Day, Earth Day, etc.)

**Does your Ocean Friendly Hotel or Restaurant participate in 1% for the Planet?** If so, they could direct their donation to “The Surfrider Foundation.”

**Important to note:** Make sure you are looping in your Regional/Chapter Managers before pursuing a collaboration with an ocean-friendly business. See our [OFR & OFH Fundraising Ideas Document](#) for more ideas and information!

# FAQs

## **Is this a certification program?**

Technically Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs are not certifications, rather programs that celebrate and recognize businesses for going above and beyond to reduce single-use plastic. The program is nationally-recognized and provides businesses with marketing collateral to showcase their participation.

## **How long will the membership be valid?**

The OFR and OFH membership will be valid for 12 months from when the business signed up. Restaurants and hotels need to renew their membership annually to ensure that they continue to meet the program standards. If a restaurant chooses not to renew, the restaurant will be removed from the website along with all advertising. Businesses that do not renew but continue to advertise as an OFR or OFH business will be subject to legal action by the Surfrider Foundation.

## **How will a restaurant or hotel be promoted?**

Restaurants and hotels will be promoted through a directory on the Surfrider Foundation's website. Membership benefits for all businesses include the use of the OFR or OFH logo and other marketing materials online and in print. We will also feature businesses regularly on our coastal blog.

## **There are several locations of a restaurant or hotel. How should I proceed with enrollment?**

The restaurant or hotel chain may sign up under the same account, but each location must be listed separately and should undergo a compliance check to ensure they all meet the criteria. They can do so via the online forms for either program. In our experience, even locations owned by the same company can meet different elements of the criteria.

## **How was the Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels standard developed?**

The OFR and OFH criteria were developed based on research and studying best practices from Surfrider's plastic reduction work. Volunteers analyzed data from Surfrider beach cleanups to identify the top items collected that originated from restaurants. Industry experts, academics, local governments and members of the business community also guided the criteria.

## **How can restaurants or hotels participate in OFR/OFH if their local chapter is not running the program?**

Restaurant and hotel managers/owners have the opportunity to sign up online if they are not near a Surfrider chapter running the program. Restaurants can visit the national OFR webpage for more details ([surfrider.org/ofr](https://surfrider.org/ofr)) and hotels can visit the national OFH webpage for more details ([surfrider.org/ofh](https://surfrider.org/ofh)).





### How are the optional donations tracked?

The Surfrider Foundation tracks these in a similar manner to how we track membership sign-ups. Chapter affiliation is automatically assigned to restaurants based on zip codes. Donations are split equally between the chapter and Surfrider HQ 50/50.

### What costs are associated with the program?

The development and oversight requirements for the program include both hard assets and staff time. For example, legal review by the Surfrider's legal team, scientific review by our environmental team, and coordination and training by the regional staff team.

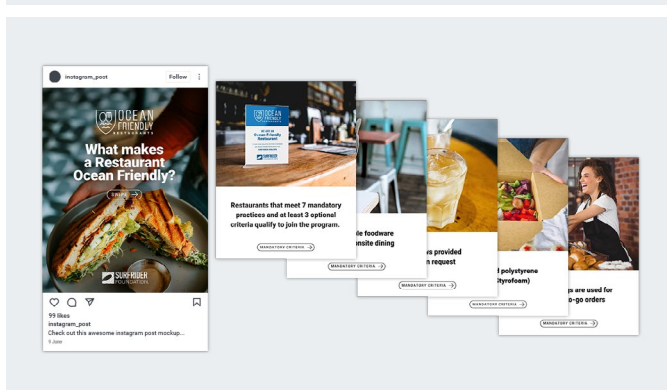
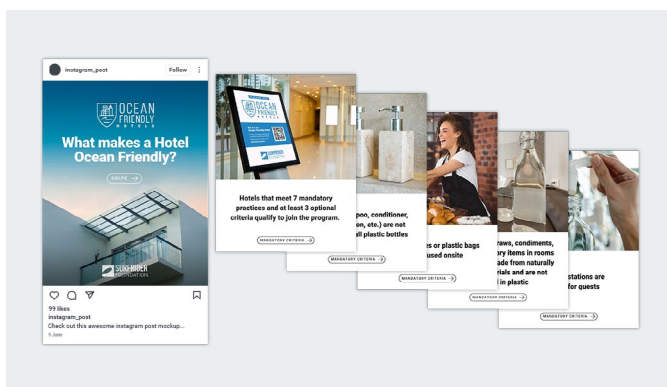
- **Printed Materials:** decals, registration manual, and brochures
- **Advertising:** website maintenance, development, and updating the businesses
- **Marketing Promotion:** costs associated with the updating of materials
- **Legal:** costs associated with nonprofit and program compliance
- **Expertise:** costs associated with criteria development and support
- **Chapter Support:** costs associated with the training and support from regional staff

### Start-up Development Program Costs

To determine our start-up investment cost, we must estimate the costs of developing and implementing the program. Some of these expenses are one-time costs such as the fee for trademark registration and logo design. Some are ongoing costs, such as the cost for director and officer insurance we provide for our volunteers which protects you from liability associated with implementing the program, as well as staff oversight and management.

While we identified these costs, we evaluated whether they are essential or optional. Essential expenses are divided into two separate categories: fixed and variable. Fixed expenses include administrative costs and insurance costs. Variable expenses include inventory, shipping cost, and other costs associated with the direct implementation of the program.

Using this formula, Surfrider estimates we have invested over \$60 thousand into the development of this program through administrative costs associated with the chapter, marketing, communication, legal, technology, membership and environmental departments involvement, but does not include the variable cost of printed materials, such as the brochures.



### Ensuring Compliance with the Program

The Surfrider Foundation is obligated to maintain accuracy and diligence in its program efforts, in order to avoid any potentially false or misleading advertising associated with the program. Any and all claims of Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels compliance must be verified within the year-long program by both the business and the Surfrider Foundation. It is incumbent upon Surfrider to ensure compliance with the OFR and OFH standards for all businesses claiming Ocean Friendly status, with at least one annual compliance visit.

### Language for Surfrider Chapters & Clubs to Post on Their Websites

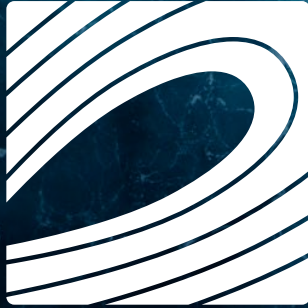
Please post the following language on your chapter website's OFR or OFH page or section: "Surfrider Foundation acknowledges that we cannot claim that all listed Businesses are 100% in compliance with OFR and OFH standards at all times, but Surfrider Foundation strives to ensure compliance, and conducts annual compliance checks. If an Ocean Friendly Restaurant or Hotel is found to be out of compliance, they are removed from the website as quickly as possible. Such a restaurant will not be reinstated on the list of Ocean Friendly Restaurants or Hotels, until the compliance issue is remedied."

### Limitation of Liability for Surfrider Chapters & Clubs to send to Restaurants

Under no circumstances shall Surfrider Foundation, including its board of directors, officials, agents, volunteers, employees, staff, representatives and any other party involved in creating, producing, registering, certifying or distributing the Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, special or consequential damages, including but not limited to the loss of profits, good will, use, data, intellectual property rights or other intangible losses (even if Surfrider Foundation has been advised of the possibility of such damages) that result from (i) the use of or inability to use the program marketing or online services, (ii) the cost of procurement of substitute goods and services (iii) statements or conduct of any third party relating to the Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels program; or (iv) any other matter relating to the Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs. You hereby acknowledge that this paragraph shall apply to all content, merchandise, and services available in conjunction with the Ocean Friendly Restaurants and Hotels programs. Because some states do not allow the exclusion or limitation of liability for consequential or incidental damages, in such states liability is limited to the fullest extent permitted by law.







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