

Be Aware Of

# Rip Currents



What They Are • The Dangers • How to Escape



## What is a rip current?

A channeled current of water flowing away from shore at the beach. They form when waves break near the shore.



## How big are they?

As narrow as 10-20 feet, or up to 10 times wider (200 feet). They typically extend out beyond the breaking waves.



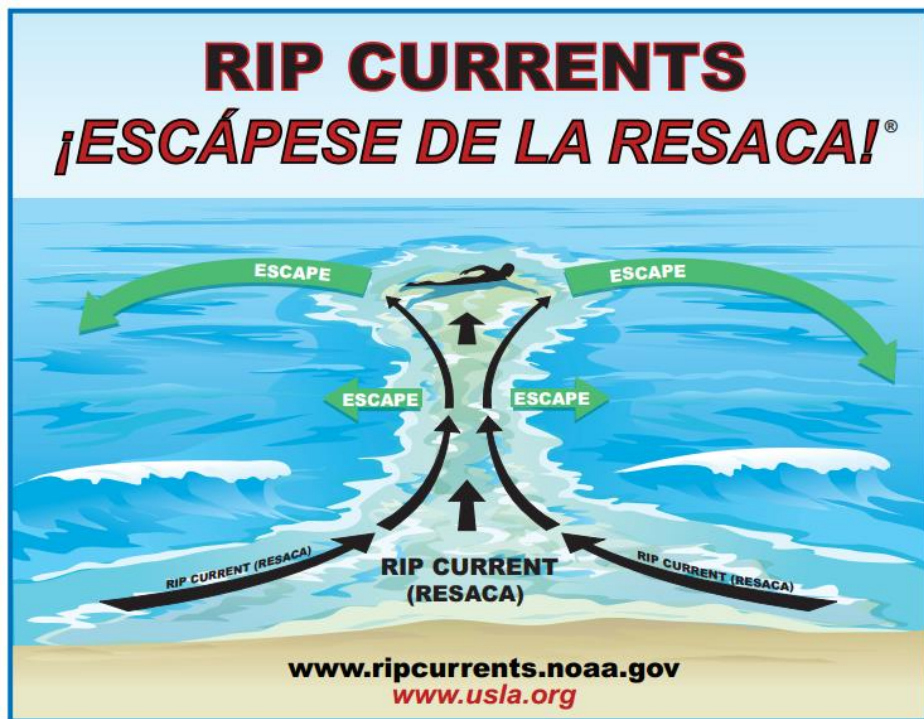
## Why should I care?

**The Gulf of Mexico is not like a swimming pool.** Rip currents can pull people offshore, leading to fear, panic, exhaustion, or drowning. Strong rip currents can flow out to sea faster than an Olympic swimmer can swim.



## More Information

- [ripcurrents.noaa.gov](http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov)
- [www.usla.org/ripcurrents](http://www.usla.org/ripcurrents)



## Safety Tips

- Don't swim alone!
- Swim near a lifeguard if possible.
- If caught in a rip current, don't fight the current.
- Swim even with the shore until the current weakens, then swim back to shore.
- Can't escape? Float or tread water and call or wave for help!



## FLORIDA BEACH FLAGS

Use beach flags to monitor the risk of rip currents. Yellow flags indicate some rip current activity. Red flags indicate strong rip currents. **Double red flags mean the water is closed to swimmers!**



Created By: NWS Tallahassee  
[weather.gov/tallahassee](http://weather.gov/tallahassee)



@NWSTallahassee



NWS Tallahassee