

Beach Flag Warning System

Know what the beach flag colors mean **BEFORE** you head to the beach!

Unsure? Ask a lifeguard!

Double Red Flags: the water is **CLOSED!** (you could be arrested or fined for entering the water in these conditions)

Beach Warning Flags

-  **Water Closed to Public**
-  **High Hazard**
High Surf &/or Strong Currents
-  **Medium Hazard**
Moderate Surf &/or Currents
-  **Low Hazard**
Calm Conditions, Exercise Caution
-  **Dangerous Marine Life**

Absence of Flags Does NOT Assure Safe Waters

Additional Resources

NWS Beach Safety Page



Gulf Coast Rip Current Awareness Page

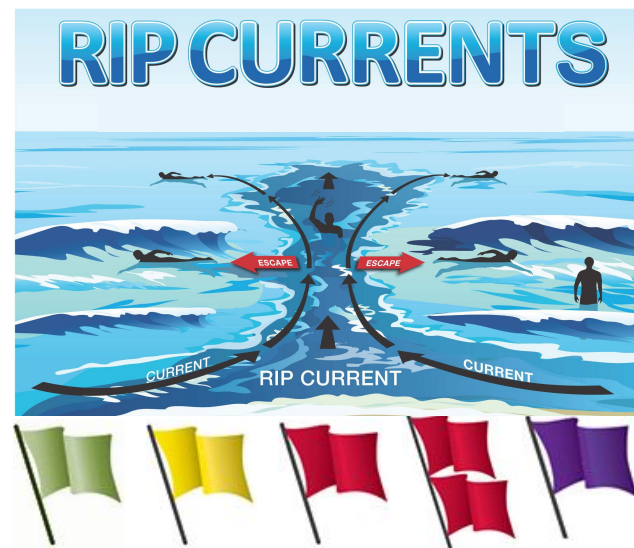


ASL Rip Current Safety Video for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Going to the Beach?

Here's What YOU Need to Know (Before You Go) About



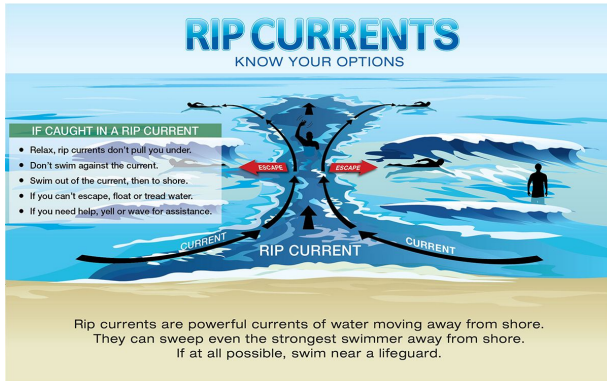
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Rip Current Facts

A rip current is a strong, narrow current of water flowing away from shore. They commonly form around breaks in sandbars and near jetties/piers.



It's a natural treadmill traveling up to 8 feet per second - faster than an Olympic swimmer!



Clues to identify a rip current:

- **Water Texture:** rip currents are often found in areas where waves are not breaking.
- **Water Color:** the water is often darker in a rip current.
- **Water Movement:** look for a line of foam, seaweed, or debris moving away from the shore.

Rip Current Safety Tips

What should you do if you get caught in a rip current?

DON'T PANIC! Rip currents will not pull you under the water.

Do not swim against the current (toward the beach), but swim out of the current (parallel to the beach).

If you cannot escape the current, **FLOAT.**
Yell and wave for help!



See someone caught in a rip current? **DO NOT ATTEMPT A RESCUE** by forming a human chain! Instead, call 911 and throw them a flotation device.

You should avoid swimming if there is any question as to whether there is a rip current. **When in doubt, DON'T GO OUT!**

Know BEFORE You Go!

Risk Level	Description
Low	The risk of rip currents is low, however, life threatening rip currents may still occur especially near groins, jetties, reefs, and piers. Always swim near a lifeguard and remember to heed the advice of the local beach patrol and flag warning systems.
Moderate	Life threatening rip currents are possible. Always swim near a lifeguard and remember to heed the advice of the local beach patrol and flag warning systems.
High	Life threatening rip currents are likely. The surf zone is dangerous for all levels of swimmers. Stay out of the water. Remember to heed the advice of the local beach patrol and flag warning systems.

There are 3 tiers of risk levels in beach forecasts: Low, Moderate, and **HIGH**.

A **HIGH RISK** means wind, swell and/or tidal conditions are **EXTREMELY** favorable for the development of numerous rip currents in the surf zone.



Always check out your beach forecast for vacation BEFORE you dip your toes in the sand!

