

RIP CURRENTS

Rip currents are natural hazards that cause over 80% of swimmer distress and rescues by lifeguards at beaches with surf – including ocean beaches and the Great Lakes. These are powerful currents of water flowing away from shore, through the breaking waves and beyond.



The best option is to swim at a beach with lifeguards, who can recommend the safest place to swim and rescue you if you become distressed. It's also important to learn about rip currents and how to self-rescue. Always check with lifeguards before entering the water.

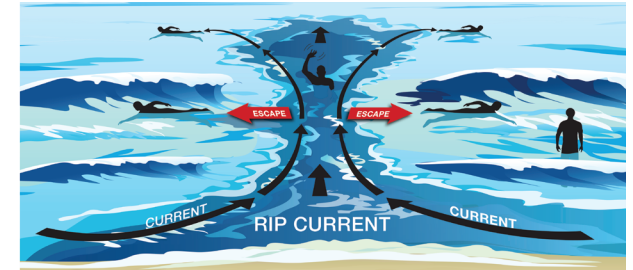
USLA'S 10 SAFETY TIPS

1. SWIM NEAR A LIFEGUARD
2. LEARN TO SWIM
3. LEARN RIP CURRENT SAFETY
4. NEVER SWIM ALONE
5. DESIGNATE A WATER WATCHER
6. ALCOHOL AND WATER DON'T MIX
7. FEET FIRST WATER ENTRY
8. LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES
9. OBSERVE SIGNS & FLAGS
10. BEAT THE HEAT & BLOCK THE SUN



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IDENTIFYING A RIP CURRENT



LOOK FOR ANY OF THESE CLUES:

- A narrow gap of darker, seemingly calmer water between areas of breaking waves and whitewater.
- A channel of churning, choppy water.
- A difference in water color.
- A line of foam, seaweed or debris moving seaward.

Rip currents are hard to spot from the beach level. The clues above may help. It is also helpful to use polarized sunglasses, as they minimize glare.

For your safety, be aware of this major surf zone hazard!

IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- Relax, rip currents don't pull you under.
- Don't swim against the current.
- You may be able to escape by swimming out of the current in a direction following the shoreline, or toward breaking waves, then at an angle toward the beach.
- You may be able to escape by floating or treading water if the current circulates back toward shore.
- If you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself. If you need help, yell and wave for assistance
- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1. Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape.

Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else!