



Public Service Announcement

# Surf Warnings and Beach Safety Tips

Summer is approaching and with the warmer weather comes increased risk to visitors along the California coast where dangerous rip currents can lead to dire circumstances if you aren't informed. The National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Weather Service (NOAA), San Francisco Police Department Marine Unit, and the San Francisco Fire Department are teaming up to help educate beach goers about the common hazards on Northern California beaches. These agencies are charged with protecting the people and resources of this coastline and are coming together to give the public information to help them stay safe while on the coast.

There have been several close calls in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) this winter, primarily due to rip currents. Although San Francisco open shorelines **do not** have traditional lifeguards, GGNRA does provide Ocean Rescue personnel who patrol Ocean Beach with the primary mission of informing and educating visitors about ocean risks. Swimming and wading are discouraged activities at non-lifeguarded beaches. Visitors who desire to swim are encouraged to go to Stinson Beach where GGNRA provides on duty lifeguards between Memorial Day to Labor Day, seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 6p.m.

The warning signs posted at the entrances to our beaches are a constant reminder of the dangers our beaches present. If you see something that you believe is an emergency, even if you're not sure, call 911 and let us make the determination.

## SAFETY TIPS:

1. Swimming is strongly discouraged at Ocean Beach due to the dangerous rip currents. Wading to your knees is allowed, but please exhibit extreme caution, as people have been swept out to sea in 3 feet of water, disappearing in seconds.
2. Rip currents are the number one risk at most beaches. If you find yourself in a rip current, remain calm; do not fight the current, swim parallel to shore and then in towards the beach. Also, even though it may be warm out on the shore, the water can be cold, which can cause hypothermia.
3. Stinson Beach is safe for swimming as it has lifeguards.
4. Keep pets on a leash and do not swim in after them if they get swept into the sea. Most dogs will get out of the water, only to watch their handler get rescued.
5. Stay off of rocks in and around the shore.
6. While boating, ensure your safety gear is in working order and that every person onboard has a life jacket that fits. Carry a VHF radio, know the waters and expected weather, and file a float plan with a friend.
7. Educate yourself on rip currents, local demographics, and sneaker waves.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR LIFEGUARDED BEACHES:

1. First, check in with the lifeguard if unsure about the conditions. Second, always observe wave and water activity prior to approaching the beach...waves may seem safe one minute, then become dangerous the next. Calm water is typically the most dangerous, as that's where the rip currents are.
2. If you do enter the water, always be with a companion.
3. Never turn your back on the ocean.
4. If you see someone swept into the sea, **do not swim in after them...call 911** and keep an eye on them until help arrives.
5. If you lose your surfboard, paddleboard, or kayak in the surf, call the USCG and inform them at (415)-399-3530.
6. Wading in knee high water can give you a false sense of security; people have been swept out to sea in 3 feet of water, disappearing in seconds.
7. Stinson Beach is the closest Life Guarded Beach near San Francisco, <http://stinsonbeachonline.com>

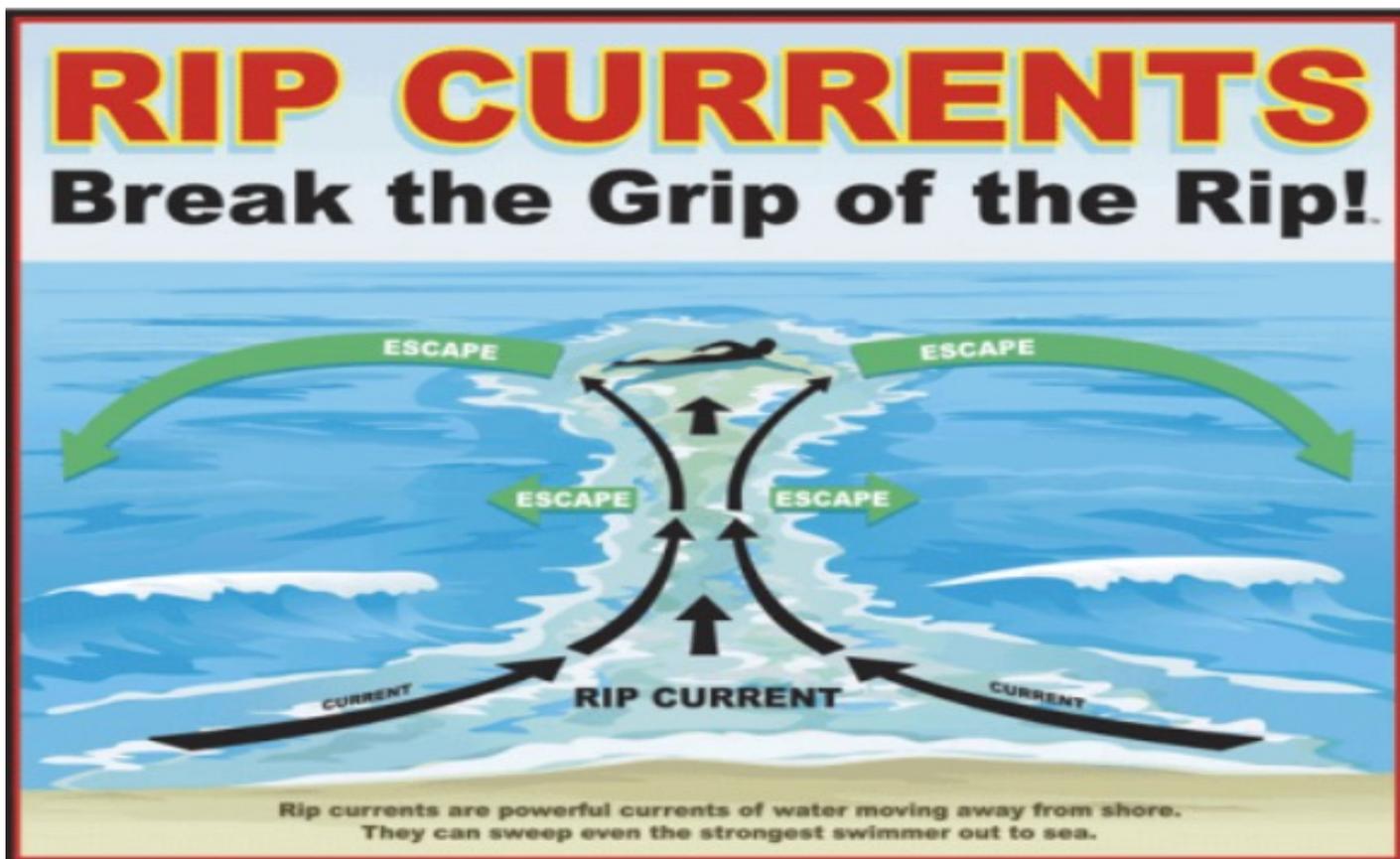
## RIP CURRENTS:

1. Stay calm.
2. If caught in a rip current, do not fight the current.
3. Swim parallel to shore, and then once out of the current, back towards shore.
4. If you can't escape, float or tread water to conserve energy until you are rescued.
5. If you need help, wave your hands high in the air and call for help.

## SNEAKER WAVES

Sneaker waves can surprise beachgoers, moving inland significantly farther than other waves, including over rocks and jetties. Sneaker waves can knock down beachgoers and sweep them into the ocean.

**\*\*\*ONLY ENTER THE WATER AT LIFEGUARDED BEACHES\*\*\***



## IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- ◆ **Don't fight the current**
- ◆ **Swim out of the current, then to shore**
- ◆ **If you can't escape, float or tread water**
- ◆ **If you need help, call or wave for assistance**

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