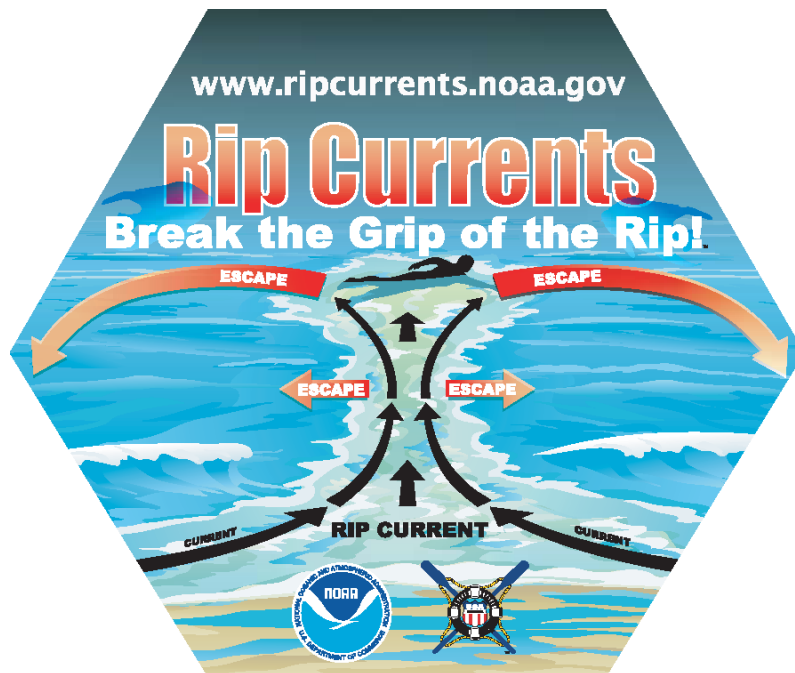


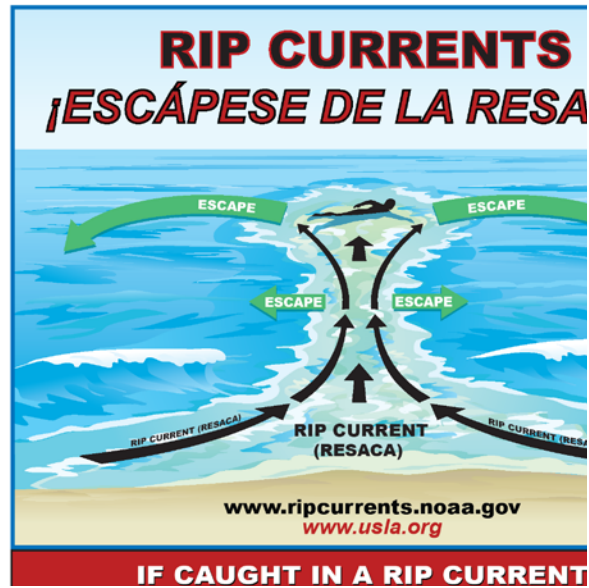
NOAA, NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92127

2010 Hazardous Beach Conditions Safety Bulletin



Rip currents are a quiet killer, unknown to many until they are caught in one. Rip currents exist every day at surf beaches throughout the US. Rip current fatalities exceeds the number of fatalities for lightning, or tornadoes, or hurricanes, or shark attacks. Always swim near a lifeguard.



The El Nino winter storms are expected to cause a prolonged hazardous beach season and a higher than normal occurrence of strong rip currents at the beaches in San Diego and Orange counties.

We would like all beachgoers to exercise extreme caution when visiting the beach during the 2010 spring and summer beach season!

The winter storms that have pounded the shore with waves and winds have caused above average erosion and sand depletion from our beaches. This has resulted in bigger sandbars farther from shore, which will form stronger rip current channels that can pull all swimmers farther into deeper waters if caught in them.

Although life threatening rip currents can form at anytime, beachgoers should be extremely cautious when entering the water at sand beaches during the critical 6 hour period around low tide, when more life threatening rip currents typically form. This period ranges from 2 hours prior to low tide to 4 hours following low tide. Statistics reveal that this time period has nearly four times as many rip current related fatalities than other tidal periods. The higher drowning frequency during low tide is due to the volume of water passing by the sandbars at a higher seaward velocity. Basically, the water will accelerate faster through breaks in the bars making it increasingly dangerous to swimmers. This process will occur until a couple hours before high tide when the water level increases enough to disrupt the seaward flow, thus weakening the rip.

The constant, extreme shifting and churning of sand and water caused by these storms has also resulted in deeper inshore holes, which can be very dangerous to children and non-swimmers. The ocean bottom will be constantly changing. Every visit to the beach will be different. What was once a smooth flat bottom may now have deep inshore holes. In addition, exposed rocks and cobble stones can injure unaware beachgoers.

All beachgoers and swimmers need to be extremely careful, especially during this 2010 beach season. Everyone should be acutely aware of the deadly power of rip currents. **Always swim in a lifeguard protected area, and check with lifeguards to find out where the safer swimming areas at the beach are located.** The United States Lifesaving Association has determined that the chance of a drowning death in an area protected by properly trained lifeguards is 1 in 18 million.

The NWS San Diego and the lifeguard agencies in San Diego and Orange counties will continue to monitor beach conditions and elevated risks throughout the 2010 season. Watch for updated bulletins. For more information on rip currents and rip current safety, please visit: <http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov> or www.usla.org/ripcurrents or <http://cslsa.org/safety/rip.asp>

Questions on rip currents and rip current safety can be sent via email to, Noel Isla at: Noel.Isla@noaa.gov or Tina Stall at: Tina.Stall@noaa.gov.

Thanks for your help in assuring a safe 2010 beach season!!!