

News Advisory



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2007

Alex Peabody
(831) 649-7132
(831) 402-7805

Public Safety Warning

High Surf and Dangerous Conditions Expected along the California Coast

An intense storm system that originated in the Southern Pacific near New Zealand is generating large surf into the coastal waters of California beginning on Tuesday, November 6 and is expected to peak Wednesday, slowly subsiding through the end of the week. The unusual swell direction for this time of year is expected to generate long period southwesterly swells with strong rip currents along the coast.

Southerly facing beaches along the southern and central California coast can expect surf that is very powerful during to this long period swell. The swell's long periods can produce deceiving lulls at times with small waves breaking in between the larger set waves. During these lulls, inexperienced surfers, swimmers, and other beach goers who have not observed the larger waves may be fooled into entering the water, or walking in areas that may be prone to being washed over by powerful surges of water.

This swell is forecasted to be large and powerful with wave periods between 16 – 20 seconds. "Park visitors may be fooled into thinking that the waterline is safer than it is due to long lulls between sets of waves," said Alex Peabody, Aquatic Safety Specialist with the State Parks Public Safety Division.

"There are a number of factors coming together that may make this large surf period dangerous for the public," says Peabody:

- 1.) High tides in the mornings may create dangerous coastal conditions in areas that are open to the southwesterly swells. Inversely, low tides during the day combined with the surf size and direction will increase the danger from rip currents along the beaches.
- 2.) This swell's long periods will produce some deceiving lulls at times; while every now and then sets will come in that are greater in size, fooling the unknowing or inexperienced visitor to the beach into thinking the ocean is safe and venturing onto exposed beaches, rock areas, and jetties.

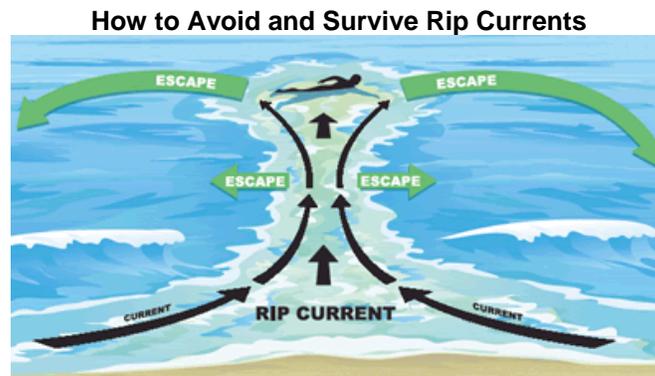
Peabody cautions visitors to avoid exposed areas close to the surf line. These areas can seem safe from most breaking waves, but the pattern of breaking waves produces a periodic sequence of large, very strong surges that can wash over rocks and beaches great distances and take visitors by surprise. This is type of danger from the surging waves will be most likely during the high tide in the morning hours. Watch from a distance, not up close!

“Exercise safety and good judgment during this swell period, swimming, wading and water sports may be dangerous for the inexperienced. Strong rip currents are focasted during to be strongest during the outgoing tides. Popular surfing areas in our state parks may see conditions to the point where experienced water recreationists may be at risk entering the water. Please check your local state park office, or NOAA Weather Service for the updated information, local conditions and area tides.” said Peabody.

“Be preventative, and be safe out there,” he said.

###

The following information is provided courtesy of the United States Lifesaving Association, in partnership with [NOAA's National Weather Service](#):



Learn how to swim!

- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.
- 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 from a rip current.

For more information on rip currents go to: www.usla.org/ripcurrents