

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wintertime Surf Can Be Dangerous

Winter Storms Create Dangerous Conditions, And a Reminder for Ocean Safety

Over the next few days, a series of powerful storms will rake the coast of California, creating high surf conditions that can be extremely dangerous for those visiting the coastline. State Parks is reminding all that when they go for a walk along the ocean shoreline, be mindful of the dangers and be aware of how you might save a life.

“Winter can be a particularly dangerous time for aquatic recreation in California State Parks,” warns Jeff David, Lifeguard Supervisor II for the Orange Coast District. “Storms can create large and dangerous surf conditions and we would plead with visitors to heed the warning signs about surf conditions, sneaker wavers, rogue waves and rip currents.”

All visitors to water recreation areas need to be aware of the fact that many people drown when caught by the periodic waves often called sneaker waves or rogue waves. It happens when people walk right at the surf line, not expecting that any wave will suddenly go much farther up the beach than other waves they are seeing. Some are so powerful that they knock people off their feet and drag them back into the ocean.

“Our intention here is to alert and educate the public in the hope that spreading the word about ocean safety will help make this a safe winter all along our coastline,” said California State Parks Deputy Director for Operations Ronilee Clark. “Winter storms and sea conditions can dramatically increase the dangers along our coastal areas and all who visit our magnificent coastline need to be aware and take precautions.”

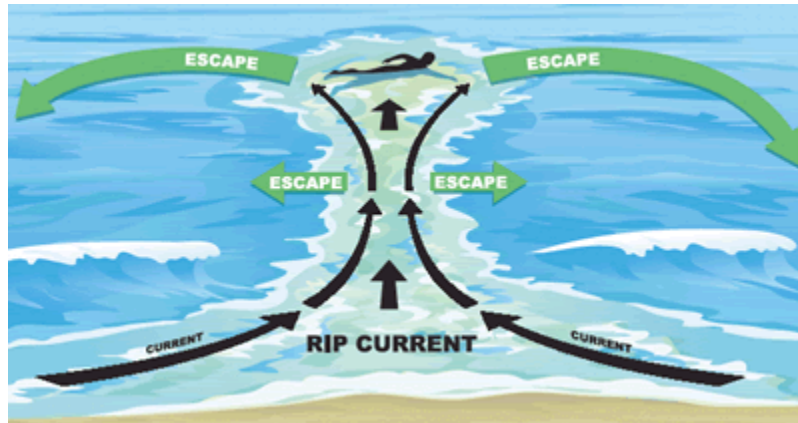
Below, we have listed things you can do to save someone caught in a rip current. The following diagram and information on Rip Currents is provided courtesy of the USLA and NOAA. For more information on Rip Currents, go to www.usla.org.

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How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents



Learn how to swim!

- First, do not flirt with danger. Keep your distance from the surf because “sneaker waves” will surge past you and may catch you and drag you out if you are too close.
- Look around. If you are walking at a remote beach, cell phones might not work for calling 9-1-1, and if they do work, it will take a long time for rescue people to get to your location, reducing the change of rescue and survival.
- 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, but not directly back into the rip current.
- 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.

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