Beach and Ocean Safety Tips

- Always swim near a staffed lifeguard tower, never swim alone.
- Check daily with a lifeguard about the surf and beach conditions. Obey warning signs in dangerous areas.
- Don't overestimate your swimming ability. Never depend on a floatation device or a leash for your safety.
- Always swim or surf in designated areas. Stay away from loose surf boards.
- A rip current can pull you off shore. If you should be caught in a rip current - DO NOT PANIC. Relax and swim parallel to shore and in the same direction as the long shore current. Remember that undertows do not exist.
- Call and wave for help if you really need it. Never fake signals or calls for help.
- Don't dive into unknown water or into shallow breaking waves.
- Be aware of the direction and strength of the long shore current.
- Keep a safe distance away from jetties and piers.
- Never throw sand for any reason.
- Refill any holes you dig in the sand.
- Build fires only in fire rings.
- Don't bring glass to the beach.
- Please do not litter. Leave the beach cleaner than you found it.
- Avoid stingrays by shuffling your feet along the bottom.
- Inshore holes are very dangerous for small children.
- Protect yourself from the sun. Use sunscreen and wear a hat.
- Remember your beach manners. Have courtesy and respect for others.

Respect the ocean and play it safe!

©1997 California Department of Parks and Recreation. All rights reserved.
Design and artwork by Christopher. Original Brochure and Continued Inspiration Greg Abbott, State Lifeguard.

RIP currents!

Rivers through the Surf

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

SDGE An Enova Company

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES

TREF TRAUMA RESEARCH & EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Inshore Holes

During the winter, storms erode the beach and move sand away from shore. The small even waves of spring and summer form offshore sand bars with the displaced sand. The surf slowly pushes the sand bars towards the beach throughout the summer.

This process is not consistent and usually results in uneven bottom contours. The deep areas between the sandbars and shore are called "inshore holes." Inshore holes can be long trenches, a series of small depressions or just a large hole up to 100 feet across with a rip current flowing out of it.

You must use caution because the longshore current and these inshore holes act as a "feeder" for Rip Currents that can carry you through the surf away from the shore. Inshore Holes are especially dangerous for non-swimmers and children.

This Public Safety Brochure was made possible by the California State Life Guards, Trauma Research and Education Foundation, SDG&E, Ronald McDonald House and the State Parks Foundation.

Please contact any of the following Lifeguard Agencies for safety presentations or further information:

Oceanside Lifeguards	966-4536
State Lifeguards - North	438-2675
Encinitas Lifeguards	633-2748
Solana Beach Lifeguards	755-1569
Del Mar Lifeguards	755-1556
San Diego Lifeguards	221-8899
State Lifeguards - South	435-0126
Imperial Beach Lifeguards	423-8322
Camp Pendelton	725-2078
Naval Station San Diego	556-2171

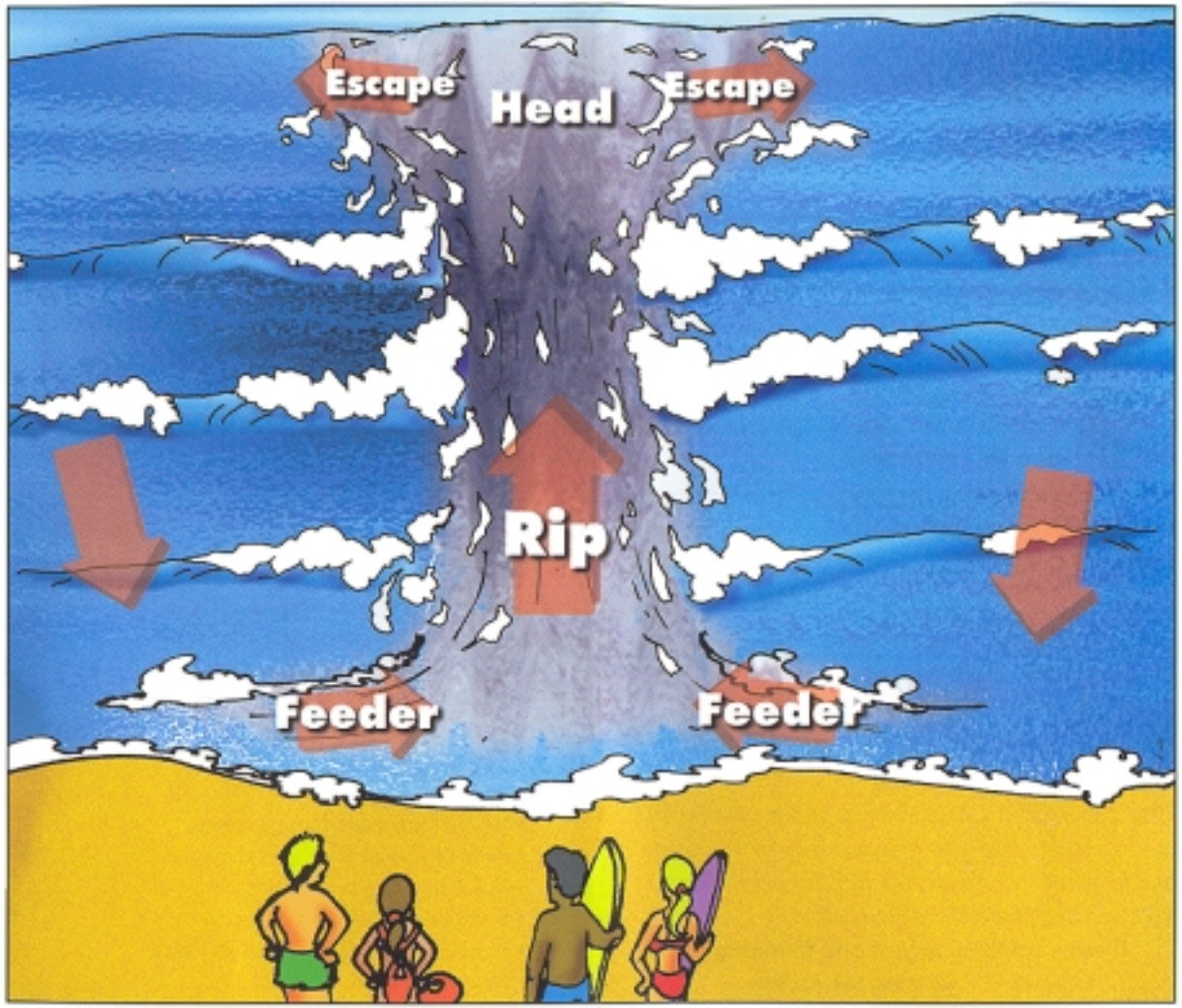
How to Recognize, Avoid and Survive...

RIP CURRENTS

Waves are caused by the winds from storm centers in the ocean. Winter surf is from the North and Summer surf is from the South. **DANGER!** Spring & Fall can have swells from either and both directions. These swells usually hit the coast at an angle which causes the **LONGSHORE CURRENT.**

This Wave Energy creates the **Longshore Current** that flows parallel to and close to the shore from the direction of the source. North to South in Winter and South to North in Summer. Either way in Spring & Fall. Look for the Longshore Current by the angle of the waves coming into shore; by the foam, swimmers & surfers flowing parallel to shore with the **Longshore Current.** REMEMBER, the **Longshore Current** acts as **"Feeder"** for dangerous **"Rip Currents".**

After a set of waves break, a lot of water and energy is pushed towards the shoreline. This displaced water will move along the beach with the long shore current until it finds its way back out to sea; this causes the rip current. **Rip currents** are narrow, river-like, currents that have been fed by the long shore current and sets of waves. Rip currents are between 50 feet and 50 yards wide and can flow up to hundreds of yards past the surfline. You can easily spot a rip current by its foamy and choppy surface. The water in a rip current can be dirty brown (from the sand being turned up) and moves rapidly out to sea. The water in a Rip Current is usually colder than the surrounding water.



If you are caught in a rip current—**do not panic.** Almost everyone can tread water and float. **STAY CALM!** The rip current will not pull you under. Call or wave for assistance or swim parallel to shore with the long shore current until you are out of the rip, then swim directly towards shore.

If you cannot recognize the long shore current or rip current, talk to the lifeguard. If you cannot swim an overhand stroke for 15 minutes, you should not take risks in the ocean. Stay in knee to waist deep water at all times. Never underestimate the power of the ocean.

The ocean is a wonderful playground. Avoid its dangers by understanding its ways and being strong enough to enjoy it safely. Take swimming lessons. Children 9-15 years old should enroll in the local Junior Lifeguard Program.