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**Rip currents among most dangerous summer beach hazards**

*Time to brush up on rip current safety tips; awareness week runs June 3 – 9*

As Tropical Storm Beryl churned along the southeastern U.S. over Memorial Day weekend, kicking up choppy seas and high surf, coastal communities got a somber reminder of the dangers posed by rip currents.

Although NOAA’s National Weather Service issued rip current warnings from Florida through Virginia there were hundreds of beach rescues and at least one death reported.

Rip currents are narrow channels of fast-moving water that pull swimmers away from the shore. They can occur at any beach with breaking waves, including the Great Lakes. They are common along the U.S. coastline even when the skies are clear. As more people head to the beach this summer, rip current rescues will rise—as, unfortunately, will deaths. Last year, 41 people lost their lives in rip currents in the United States, but on average more than one hundred people die each year from them.

NOAA, along with the U.S. Lifesaving Association and the National Park Service, are working to reduce the death toll by educating people throughout the year, and especially this week during Rip Current Awareness Week, about the danger of rip currents and how to avoid them or survive if caught in one.

“The National Weather Service provides rip current forecasts, so I urge people to check with us before heading to the beach this summer,” said Laura Furgione, acting director of the National Weather Service. "Knowing the conditions before you go will ensure you have a safe and fun day at the beach."

“Each year, America’s beach lifeguards rescue more than 50,000 swimmers from rip currents,” said B. Chris Brewster, president of the United States Lifesaving Association. “Swimming at a guarded beach can reduce your chances of drowning to 1 in 18 million.”

**Rip Current Safety Tips**

Before you go:

* [Check NOAA’s surf zone forecasts](http://www.weather.gov/ripcurrents/forecasts.shtml)
* Study how rip currents work and how to escape them.
* Swim at a beach with a lifeguard and talk with the lifeguard about the safest areas to swim.
* Observe and obey signs and flags posted to warn about rip currents.
* Never swim near jetties or piers where there are fixed rip currents.
* Don’t swim in a large body of water that is subject to changing wind, waves and currents unless you are a strong swimmer.
* Swim with a buddy, never alone.

If you get caught in the grip of a rip current:

* Yell for help immediately.
* Don’t swim against a rip current – it will just tire you out.
* Escape the rip current by swimming parallel to the beach until you are free.
* If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water.
* When out of the current, swim toward the shore at an angle away from the rip current.

Beach communities interested in erecting signs featuring rip current safety information on the beach may contact the National Weather Service’s Rip Current Awareness Program for details: [Deborah.Jones@noaa.gov](mailto:Deborah.Jones@noaa.gov); 301-713-1677 x 124.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. NOAA’s National Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy. Working with partners, NOAA’s National Weather Service is building a Weather-Ready Nation to support community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather. Visit us online at weather.gov and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/US.National.Weather.Service.gov?ref=ts).

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On the Web:

Surf Zone Forecasts: [*http://www.weather.gov/ripcurrents/forecasts.shtml*](http://www.weather.gov/ripcurrents/forecasts.shtml)

Safety Tips: *http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/tips.shtml*

United States Lifesaving Association: <http://www.usla.org>

National Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov>

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>