

BEACH SAFETY



A day at the beach can be fun and memorable! But, the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Lifeguard Division wants to remind you of some dangers you should be aware of when you spend time on the sand and in the ocean.

Always swim and surf near an open lifeguard station and never swim alone.

Check in with the nearest lifeguard daily ocean conditions and hazards.

Always swim and surf within your abilities. Use good judgment.

If in doubt of the large surf, do NOT go out!

Never dive into shallow water. Remember feet-first every time!

Use swim fins and a leash whenever bodyboarding.

Keep a safe distance from piers and rocks, and always obey warning signs.

Never throw sand and always fill in holes before you leave the beach.

Protect yourself from the sun. Use sunscreen and wear a hat.

Respect other beach patrons and remember your beach manners.

The bicycle path is like a road. Always look both ways before crossing!

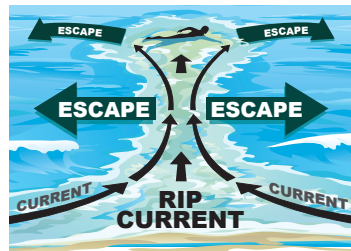
If you or someone in your group gets lost, always find the nearest lifeguard.



Beware of Rip Currents

A rip current is a current that runs from shallow water near the shore to deeper waters beyond the surfline in a river-like phenomenon. Rip currents can occur at any beach with breaking waves. The bigger the waves, the bigger the rip currents.

Rip currents are a leading hazard to beach goers. Inexperienced swimmers are often caught in the current and pulled out to deep water. Panicked swimmers try to counter a rip current by swimming straight back to shore, putting themselves at risk of drowning because of fatigue.



Here are ways to escape a rip current:

- Remain calm.
- Tread water and float.
- Stay on your bodyboard or surfboard.
- Get the attention of a lifeguard or a bystander who can alert a lifeguard.
- If you are able to self-rescue, swim parallel to shore first to get out of the rip current before swimming into shore.

Watch Out for Stingrays

Stingrays are bottom-dwellers, found partially buried in shallow sandy waters during the summer. They are flat fish with eyes and nostrils on the top side of their bodies with their mouths and gills underneath.

The stingray's defense mechanism is camouflage. If it is stepped on, it will sting. To prevent getting stung, shuffle your feet along the sandy bottom to allow time for a stingray to move away.

If you get stung by a stingray, get immediate help from a lifeguard or paramedic.



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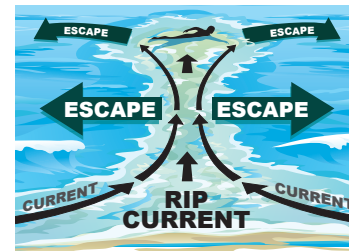
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