Rip currents account for 80% of rescues performed by surf beach lifeguards.

What are rip currents?
- Rip currents are channelized currents of water flowing away from shore at surf beaches.
- Rip currents typically form at breaks in sandbars, and also near structures such as jetties and piers.
- Rip currents are quite common and can be found on many surf beaches every day, including Great Lakes beaches.

Why are rip currents dangerous?
- Rip currents pull people away from shore.
- Rip current speeds can vary from moment to moment and can quickly increase to become dangerous to anyone entering the surf.
- Rip currents can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

What are some clues that a rip current may be present?
- A channel of churning, choppy water.
- A difference in water color.
- A line of foam, seaweed or debris moving seaward.
- A break in the incoming wave pattern.

What if I'm caught in a rip current?
- Stay calm.
- Don't fight the current.
- Escape the current by swimming in a direction following the shoreline. When free of the current, swim at an angle—away from the current—toward shore.
- If you are unable to escape by swimming, float or tread water. When the current weakens, swim at an angle away from the current toward shore.
- If at any time you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, call or wave for help.
**RIP CURRENTS**

Break the Grip of the Rip!

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**IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT**
- Don’t fight the current
- Swim out of the current, then to shore
- If you can’t escape, float or tread water
- If you need help, call or wave for assistance

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Rip currents are powerful currents of water moving away from shore. They can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.

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**How do I help someone else?**

Don’t become a victim while trying to help someone else!

Many people have died in efforts to rescue rip current victims.

- Get help from a lifeguard.
- If a lifeguard is not present, yell instructions on how to escape.
- If possible, throw the rip current victim something that floats.
- Call 9-1-1 for further assistance.

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A lifeguard rescues a swimmer caught in a rip current.
Where can I get more information about rip currents?

- Before you leave for the beach, check the latest National Weather Service forecast for local beach conditions. Many offices issue a Surf Zone Forecast.

- When you arrive at the beach, ask on-duty lifeguards about rip currents and any other hazards that may be present.

- More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:

  www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov
  www.usla.org
  www.miseagrant.umich.edu/rip

NOAA's National Weather Service, National Sea Grant College Program, and the United States Lifesaving Association are working to educate the public on the dangers of rip currents.