



Chris Brewster, United States Lifesaving Association

A narrow, darker gap between areas of breaking waves is one sign of a rip current.

Facts about rip currents

- ◆ Rip current speeds vary. Average speeds are 1-2 feet per second, but they have been measured as fast as 8 feet per second—faster than an Olympic swimmer!
- ◆ Rip currents can be very narrow or more than 50 yards wide.
- ◆ Sometimes a rip current ends just beyond the line of breaking waves; however, others may continue to flow hundreds of yards offshore.
- ◆ Rip currents do not pull people under the water—they pull people away from shore.
- ◆ Rip currents are sometimes mistakenly called undertow or riptides but these terms are not correct. Only the term rip currents is technically correct.

Safety tips

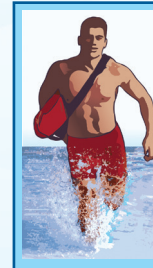
- ◆ Know how to swim.
- ◆ Never swim alone.
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out.
- ◆ Swim near a lifeguard.

United States Lifesaving Association statistics indicate that the chance of death by drowning at a beach protected by lifeguards is 1 in 18 million.

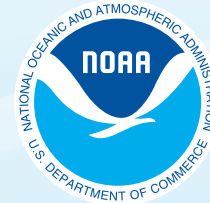
Where can I get more information about rip currents?

- ◆ Before you leave for the beach, check the latest National Weather Service forecast for local beach conditions.
- ◆ When you arrive at the beach, ask lifeguards about rip currents and other hazards.
- ◆ More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:

**weather.gov/safety/ripcurrent
usla.org/ripcurrents**



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.



NOAA's National Weather Service
Analyze, Forecast, and Support Office
www.weather.gov/safety/ripcurrent

BREAK THE GRIP OF THE RIP

RIP CURRENTS!

