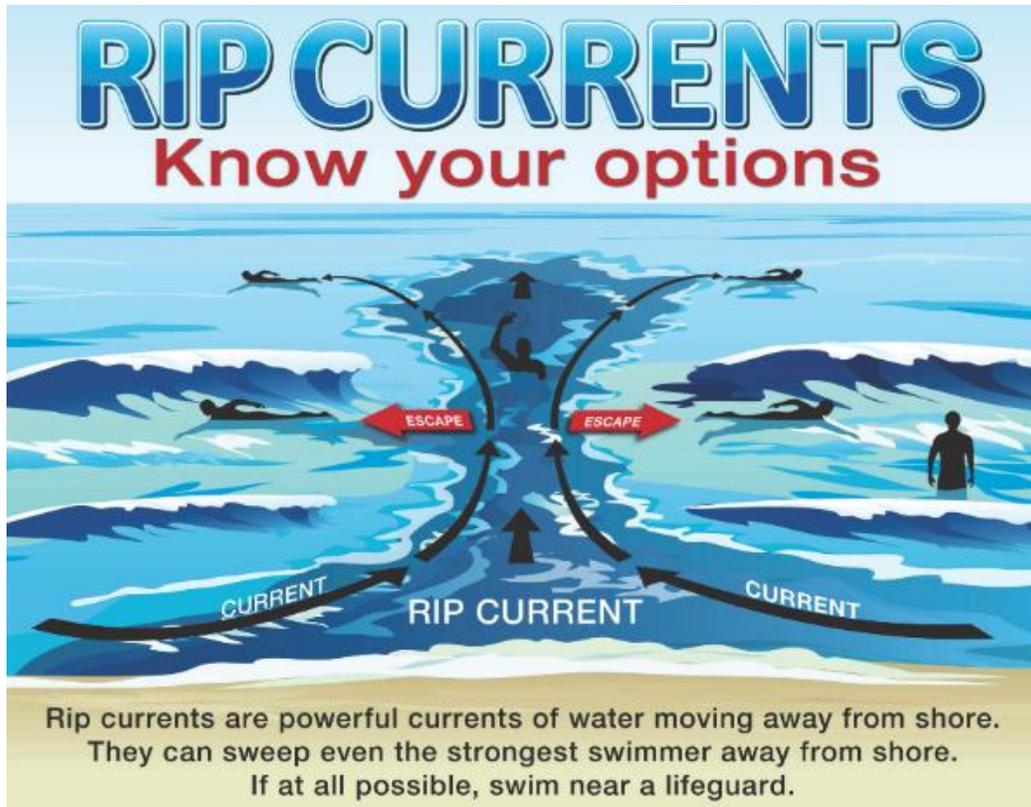


RIP Currents

by

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Last year I wrote a commentary titled “Drown Proofing” (<https://foreverfree.host/articles//Drown%20proofing.pdf>) .

While North Carolina’s beaches are known for their beauty, they can also be extremely dangerous. As you sit on the beach, while watching a calm surface, just below that surface, and sometimes just inches from the waterline, there may lay a threat that, even if you are a world class swimmer, can easily kill you.

That threat is called a Rip Current!

Back in the late 80’s at Ft. Fisher, NC a father and his 4 year old son were on a blow-up pool float and got caught in a rip current and pulled out to sea. They were then caught up in another current that carried them a mile up the coast. At the point where they were rescued, they were about a quarter mile off shore and barely visible from the shore. The father and son were lucky, especially as neither one was a strong swimmer.

The following information on rip currents is taken from a newsletter that Congressman Gaetz recently sent to his constituents in Northwest Florida.

Know BEFORE you enter the water what rip currents are: Rip currents are channelized currents of water flowing away from shore at surf beaches. Typically, they form at breaks in sandbars, and also near structures, such as jetties and piers. They can also form near cliffs that jut into the water. Rip currents are common and can be found on most surf beaches, including the beaches of Florida's First District.

How to survive a rip current:

Relax. Rip currents don't pull you under. A rip current is a natural treadmill that travels an average speed of 1-2 feet per second, but has been measured as fast as 8 feet per second — faster than an Olympic swimmer. Trying to swim against a rip current will only use up your energy, which you need to survive and escape the rip current.

Do NOT try to swim directly into shore. Swim along the shoreline until you escape the current's pull. When free from the pull of the current, swim at an angle away from the current toward shore.

If you feel you can't reach shore: Relax, face the shore, and call or wave for help. Remember: If in doubt, don't go out!

If at all possible, only swim at beaches with lifeguards. It's better to swim at a beach with someone who can potentially save you.

If you choose to swim at beaches without a lifeguard, never swim alone. Take a friend and have that person take a cell phone so that person can call 911 for help.

By following these tips, you can ensure you and the ones around you can safely enjoy summer along the North Carolina coast.