



CoastSmart.ca



## HAZARD INFORMATION

# Rip Currents

Rips are strong currents that can start near the shore and rush out to sea, quickly taking you out of your comfort zone, from the shallows to deeper water, or at times into rocks.

Some experts, like rescuers or advanced surfers, may use rip currents to get to people in trouble or to get out through the surf zone. However, they have years of training and experience in order to use rips safely. For the vast majority of beachgoers, rip currents are a major hazard. (There are other types of currents such as Long Shore Currents and Tidal Currents.)

At local beaches, about 80% of all surf rescue calls are related to people getting in trouble with rips. These currents are stronger than an Olympic swimmer and can pull unwary beachgoers quickly out to sea. Knowing how to recognize rips and where they are most commonly found is important so you can avoid them. Ask a local!

## HOW TO BE COASTSMART – LEARN HOW TO AVOID RIPS:

### RIP CURRENTS ARE STRONGEST:

- Around rocks, islands and headlands
- Around submerged sandbars

### SPOT A RIP BY LOOKING FOR:

- A place where the waves aren't breaking regularly due to the current
- A channel of darker, choppy water
- Foam, seaweed, sand suspended in water column, or other debris flowing out from the shore through the breakers

## HOW TO BE COASTSMART – LEARN HOW TO GET OUT OF A RIP:

- If caught in a rip current, stay calm – don't panic
- If you can stand, wade, don't swim
- Never let go of your board or any floatation; it will help you stay afloat and can assist responders in locating you
- Never try to swim directly against the rip or you'll get exhausted
- Swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the current, then head for the beach
- If you can't escape, tread water, raise your hand and shout for help
- Read and understand all rip current related signage at local beaches; they can help you learn about specific areas where currents re-occur.