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HAZARD INFORMATION

Unexpected Waves

Beware of unexpected waves – they are known as “surge waves” or “sneaker waves” because they surprise people by appearing without warning. Waves occur in sets. Small wave sets are often followed by larger wave sets. But waves are unpredictable – they can sneak up on beachgoers by appearing suddenly after a relatively long period of calm (anywhere from 5- 20 minutes of calm water). By that time, many people have let down their guard and stopped watching the ocean, leading to greater risk as these sneaker waves can surge high up on the beach or rocks with deadly force.

HOW TO BE COASTSMART

- Face the ocean when you are near the water
- Keep an eye on the incoming waves and stay alert
- Stay in arm’s reach of your children when near the water
- Be extra cautious during and after storms as this is the highest risk period for surge waves
- Remember that waves can be high any time of year, but are most common from November to April
- Understand that unexpected entry into the water is not uncommon. Many people who are injured or die in the ocean didn’t even intend to get wet
- Observe the conditions closely before you step out onto the rocks or the beach
- Check the daily tidal information and weather forecast (If you don’t know, don’t go)