Coast and Beach

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Around 37% of drownings occur around the coast, that's about 101 deaths every year (Interactive report | National Water Safety Forum).

Beach Lifeguards also save and help thousands of people who get into difficulty in the water.

The coastline and beaches are very dynamic and changeable environments.

Understanding more about how these environments work makes it easier to enjoy them, and makes you less likely to become one of the statistics.

Whenever you are near water:

- Stop and Think
- Stay Together

In an emergency:

- Call 999
- Float

Cold Water

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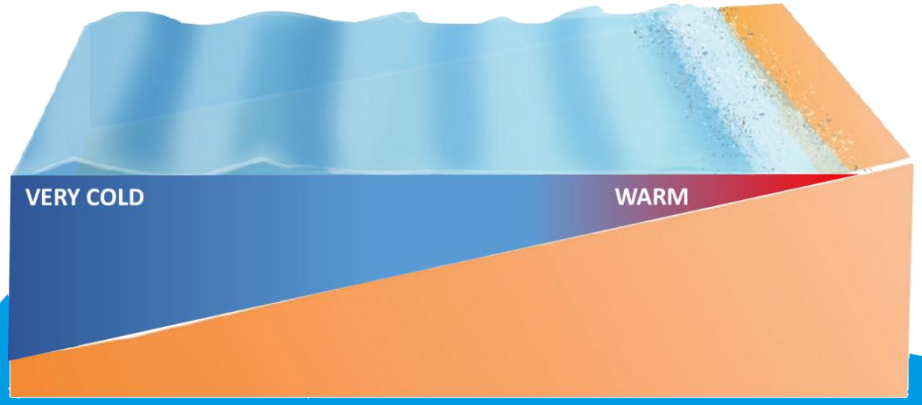
Even during the summer the sea stays very cold, particularly the deeper water just a few metres from the shore.

Swimming parallel with the shore means you can stand up if you start to feel tired or if you inhale water.

If you're going into deeper water to surf, it's a good idea to wear a wetsuit.

If you want to swim, try to enter from somewhere shallow. If you want to jump from cliffs, docks, or harbours find an organised group with rescue cover (such as lifeguards).



Rip Currents

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What is a rip current?

- Rip currents are where the water that has been washed onto the beach by the waves flows back out to sea

What is the danger of a rip current if you swim into one?

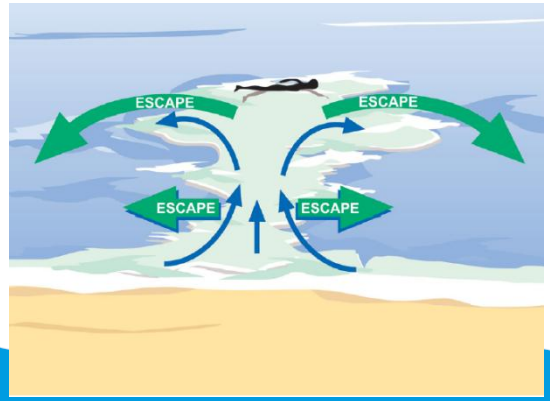
- You could get swept out to sea

Are rip currents always in the same place?

- No. Some rip currents always appear in the same place, some move around the beach, others appear and disappear depending on the waves and tide

How can you escape a rip current?

- Swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the rip, then swim towards the beach



Rip Currents

To spot rip currents look out for:

- Darker deeper channels of water
- Churned up sea bed
- Debris floating out to sea (seemingly against the waves)
- Change in the shape of energy of the waves
- Rips often flow along cliffs or piers extending into the sea

Can you spot the rips in these increasingly difficult examples?

(click or touch where you think the rip current is, some pictures have more than one)

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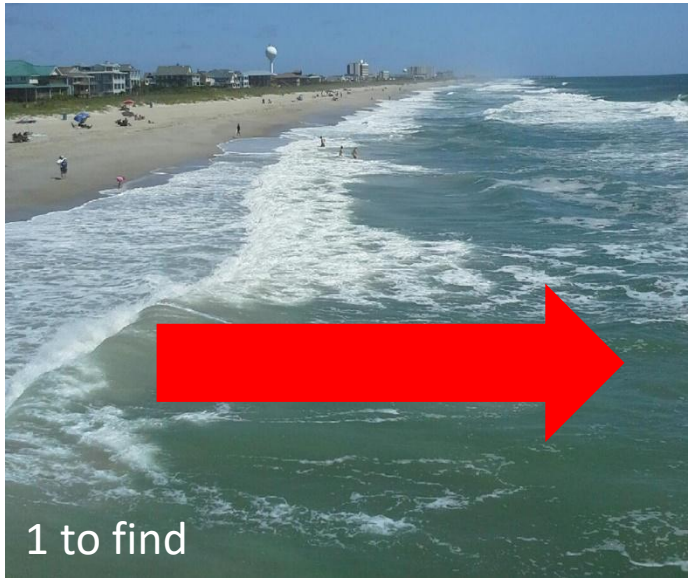
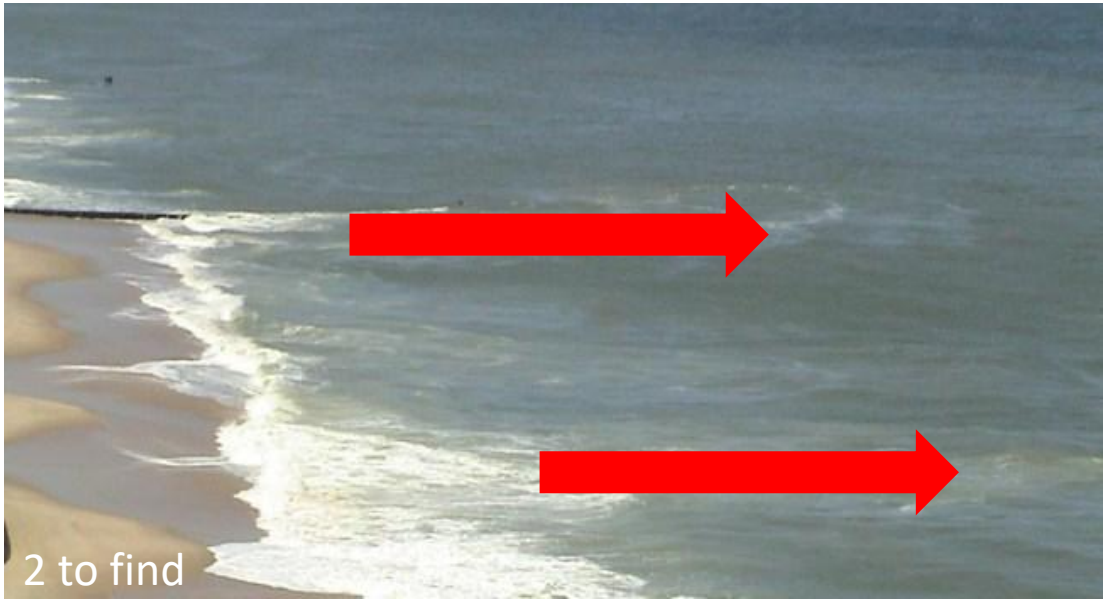
(click or touch where you think the rip current is)





Dye release experiment to expose a rip current

1. Watch the first video, you have 6 seconds to identify where the rip is
2. Watch the second video to find out if you were correct

Rip current video 1

Rip current video 2

(www.scienceofthe surf.com)

Longshore Currents

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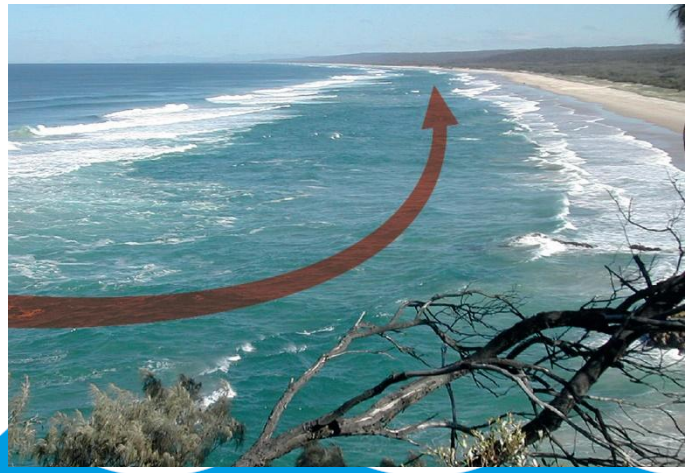
Longshore currents run **along** the beach.

When you're in the sea, these currents can carry you along the beach away from where you got into the water, and may even carry you to an area where you can't get out or towards a rip current.

Longshore currents can be difficult to spot, but look for the waves coming in at an angle to the beach, and groynes on the beach which are used to stop the sand washing up the beach with the longshore current.



Tides

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How many high and low tides are there per day?
2 high and 2 low: high and low times change every day.

Will a tide flow up a shallow or steep shelving beach the fastest?
Fastest up a shallow shelving beach.

How do the tide and cliffs sometimes result in people needing to be evacuated from the cliffs by helicopter?
People don't check the tide times and then get cut off from the beach exits when the tide comes in.

Tides video

Find information about the tide times online or on signs at the beach. Remember they change every day. If in doubt, ask a lifeguard.

Offshore Winds

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Do offshore winds blow towards the land or out to sea?

Out to sea.

The wind can blow people on inflatables out to sea, and surface chop can make it difficult to swim back towards the shore. What is surface chop?

Water blowing off the tops of waves, blowing droplets into your face, making seeing and breathing difficult.

What lifeguard flag is used to help you to identify wind direction (clue below)?

Orange windsock.

Beach Flags

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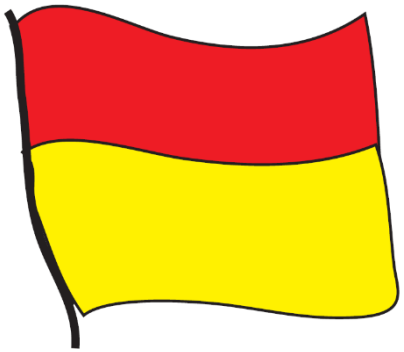
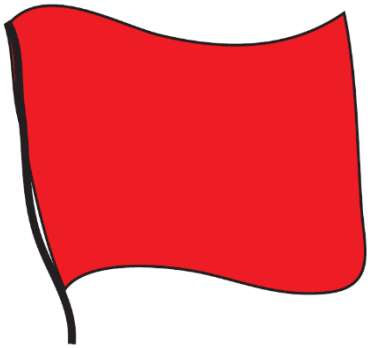
What do the Beach Flags mean?



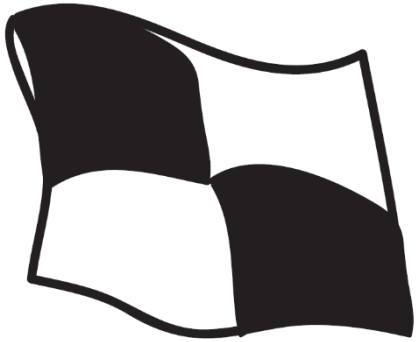
1. Red & Yellow

Lifeguarded area
Safest place to swim



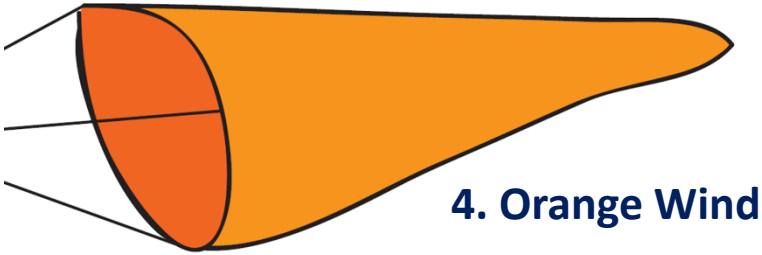
2. Red

Danger
No swimming



3. Black & White

Water sports area
No swimming



4. Orange Windsock

Direction and
strength of the wind

Plan a trip to the beach, including as many beach activities as you can think of.

Create a check list for each activity that will help you be aware of any risks that you want to avoid.

Other sessions to look at

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Introduction to Drowning and Cold Water

Inland Water Sites

Coastal and Beach Water Sites

Orienteering – Hazard Hunt

Witness Statement