



STATE OF FLORIDA

# DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **HIGH RISK OF DANGEROUS RIP CURRENTS EXPECTED TODAY IN WALTON, BAY, GULF, FRANKLIN, NASSAU, DUVAL, ST. JOHNS AND FLAGLER COUNTIES**

**TALLAHASSEE-** Florida Division of Emergency Management officials are urging beachgoers in Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, Nassau, Duval, St. Johns and Flagler counties to use caution today as a high risk of dangerous rip currents and high surf is expected along North Florida beaches. In addition to rip currents, large battering waves could impact the shoreline and a high surf advisory is in effect along the Panhandle coast from Franklin County westward through 7pm this evening. When red flags are flying beachgoers need to be aware that swimming in the Gulf of Mexico can be dangerous.

“Rip currents and high surf can be life threatening to anyone entering the water,” State Meteorologist Amy Godsey said. “Beachgoers should be very cautious at our North Florida beaches today, especially if they are swimming at an unguarded beach. If they are in doubt, they shouldn’t go out.”

A rip current is a narrow, powerful current of water running perpendicular to the beach, out into the ocean. These currents may extend 200 to 2,500 feet (61 to 762 meters) lengthwise, but they are typically less than 30 feet (9 meters) wide. Rip currents can often move at more than 5 miles per hour (8 kilometers per hour) or faster. High surf which are large battering waves may cause a threat to life or property

Rip currents are responsible for about 150 deaths every year in the United States. In Florida, they kill more people annually than thunderstorms, hurricanes and tornadoes combined. They are the number-one concern for beach lifeguards. According to the United States Lifesaving Association, 80 percent of surf beach rescues are attributed to rip currents.

### **Before going into the water, beachgoers should check for these signs of a rip current:**

- A channel of churning choppy water
- An area having a noticeable difference in water color
- A line of foam, seaweed or debris moving steadily seaward
- A break in the incoming wave pattern

Beachgoers who want to learn more about rip currents can visit [www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov](http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov). For more information on the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN!, please visit: [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org). For the latest weekly situation and flash reports go to: [www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT](http://www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT) or join our blog at: <http://flsertinfo.blogspot.com/>.

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