



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 THRU FRIDAY IN NASSAU, DUVAL, ST. JOHNS, FLAGLER, VOLUSIA, BREVARD, INDIAN RIVER, ST. LUCIE AND MARTIN COUNTIES**

**TALLAHASSEE-** Florida Division of Emergency Management officials are urging beachgoers in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Flagler, Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties to use caution today thru Friday as a high risk of dangerous rip currents is expected along the First, Space and Treasure coasts. When red flags are flying beachgoers need to be aware that swimming in the Atlantic can be dangerous.

"While we want swimmers and surfers to enjoy their time at the beach, we want them to remember safety comes first, and rip currents can be life threatening to anyone entering the water," Acting State Meteorologist Amy Godsey said. "Before going into the water, check the rip current outlook, swim on guarded beaches and remember the warning flag signs. We strongly suggest that beachgoers stay out of the water when red flags are flying."

Rip currents are currents of water moving away from shore. The strongest rip currents can attain speeds reaching 8 feet per second - this is faster than an Olympic swimmer can sprint. On average, more people die every year from rip currents than from shark attacks, tornadoes or lightning. According to the United States Lifesaving Association, 80 percent of surf beach rescues are attributed to rip currents, and more than 100 people die annually from drowning in rip currents.

### **Beachgoers should take the following precautionary and preparedness actions:**

- Swim at guarded beaches and heed to the advice of beach patrol.
- If caught in the seaward pull of a rip current do not attempt to move directly toward shore. Instead move sideways across the rip currents until the pull eases.
- If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1.
- Throw the rip current victim something that floats: a lifejacket, a cooler or inflatable ball.
- Yell instructions on how to escape.
- Never go into the water alone, and if you aren't a strong swimmer, stick to shallow waters (although shallow waters can be dangerous too for weak swimmers).
- Only swim in areas where there is a lifeguard or strong swimmers on the beach who can keep a safe eye on you.

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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