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North Carolina Beach Safety | Outer Banks NC ^[1]

Play hard, but be sure to play it safe!

We know you can't wait to hear the rolling waves and feel the soft sand between your toes - but before you hit the beaches of the Outer Banks, please review the following ocean safety guidelines. We want you to have a wonderful time on the gorgeous Outer Banks seashore, but more importantly, we want you and your family to be safe.

Click on any of the links below to go directly to the safety topic:

[General Ocean Safety](#) [Rip Currents](#) [Jellyfish](#) [Lifeguarded Beaches](#)

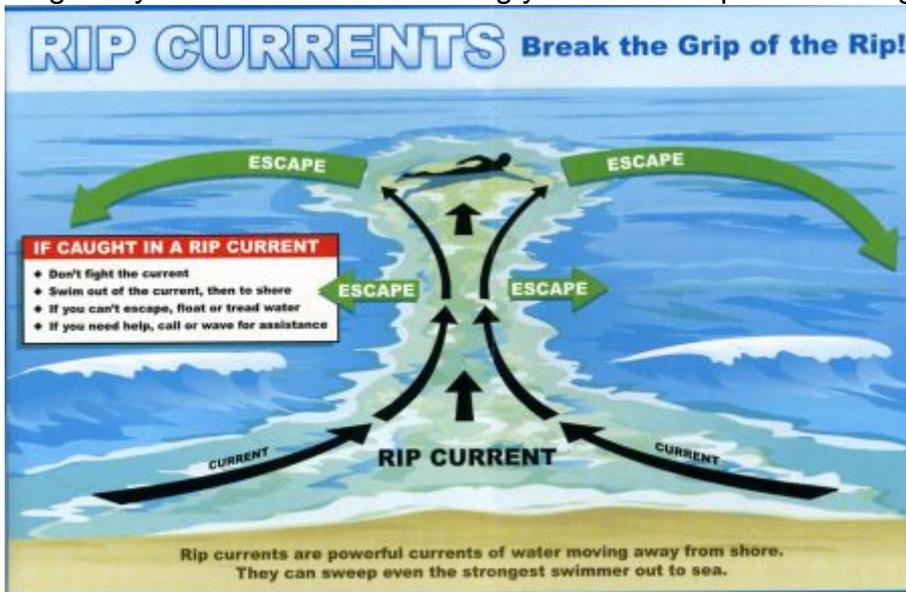
General Ocean Safety

- Never swim alone.
- Carefully watch children at all times.
- Never enter the water when red "No Swimming" flags are flying.
- It is always best to swim in front of a lifeguard station.
- Always feel free to ask the lifeguard about water conditions and safety risks.
- Don't swim at night.
- Obey all posted rules and regulations.
- Stay 300 feet away from fishing piers.
- Avoid swimming near anglers casting their lines.
- Avoid swimming near surfers.
- Don't turn your back on the waves - watch what is coming.

Rip Currents

Rip currents are narrow channels of fast moving water flowing away from shore. This happens when there is a break in a sandbar near the shore or when the current is offshore. Rip currents can reach up to 100 feet in width and travel up to 3 mph! Some are present for only a few hours, but others are permanent. Rip currents are more prevalent after storms and account for more than 80% of lifeguard beach rescues.

If you are caught in a rip current, do not try to swim against it. Even the best swimmers can tire out trying to fight against a rip current. **Stay calm and swim parallel to shore** until you are out of the current. Rip currents are rarely more than 30 feet wide. If you can't break out of the current, float calmly until it dissipates, usually just beyond the breakers. Then, swim diagonally to shore. The worst thing you can do is panic or struggle.



Learn about rip current safety

before your Outer Banks vacation.

Signs of rip currents include:

- A difference in water color - either murkier from sediments or darker from greater depth.
- A difference in the waves - larger, choppy waves in the rip current and smaller, calmer waves in front of the sandbar.
- Foam or objects moving steadily seaward.
- An offshore plume of turbid water past the sandbars.
- NOTE: Polarized sunglasses cut glare and can help to spot rip currents.

Rip Tide Safety Tips are provided courtesy of North Carolina Sea Grant. For more information on Rip Currents please visit the [NOAA Rip Current Safety site](#) [2].

Jellyfish



Jellyfish are

^[3] often brought to shallow water or ashore by the

currents or wind. Jellyfish can be difficult to spot due to their see-through bodies. It's important to note that you can be stung by a jellyfish that has been washed to shore. As you're walking along the beach, keep a lookout for jellyfish camouflaged in the sand.

Fortunately, most jellyfish stings aren't serious. Typical reactions include red welts, stinging, and itching. If you are stung by a jellyfish, 1) wash the area with salt water, 2) apply white vinegar to neutralize the venom, and 3) take an over-the-counter pain reliever. If you experience difficulty in breathing, chest pain, or any other serious symptoms, seek medical



treatment immediately.

Lifeguarded Beaches

The Outer Banks offers highly qualified and skilled lifeguards. Some areas of the Outer Banks have fixed lifeguard stands, while others only offer roving patrols. It is always safest to swim near a fixed lifeguard station - particularly if you have children. **Lifeguards are generally on duty between Memorial Day and Labor Day** weekend. Please note that hours and lifeguard locations are subject to change without notice.

Visit the following pages for detailed information regarding beach access and lifeguard stands in individual Outer Banks towns:

[4x4 Beaches Info](#) ^[4]

[Corolla Beach Info](#) ^[5]

[Duck Beach Info](#) ^[6]

[Kitty Hawk Beach Info](#) ^[7]

[Kill Devil Hills Beach Info](#) ^[8]

[Nags Head Beach Info](#) ^[9]

[Hatteras Beach Info](#) ^[10]

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Links

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- [2] <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/>
- [3] <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/faq.shtml>
- [4] <https://www.sunrealtync.com/4-wheel-drive-beaches-carova-beach-info>
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