



Circular 075:19

Date: Thursday 17th October 2019

Subject: 2019/2020 SLSNZ Key Beach Safety Messages

Attention: All Club Chairs, Club Lifesaving Officers and Senior Lifeguards

Action: Information sharing, check emails for Trial Date letters

Circulars are available at: <http://lifesaving.org.nz/lifesaving/lifesaving-operations-circulars/>

To assist our members who may be required to offer advice to the press locally or to the public, SLSNZ have developed the below beach safety messages to ensure consistent accurate communication is going out to the public.

2019/2020 SLSNZ Key Beach Safety Messages

Beach Safety Messages

1. Choose a lifeguarded beach and swim between the flags
2. **Look for**, read and understand the safety signs - ask a lifeguard for advice as conditions can change regularly
3. Don't overestimate your ability or your children's ability to cope in the conditions
4. Always keep a very close eye on young children in or near the water - keep them within arm's reach at all times
5. Get a friend to swim with you - never swim or surf alone
6. Watch out for rip currents, they can carry you away from shore. **If caught in a rip, remember the 3 R's: 1. RELAX & FLOAT to conserve your energy, 2. RAISE YOUR HAND to signal for help 3. RIDE the rip until it stops & you can swim back to shore safely. Nobody is stronger than a rip.**
7. When fishing from rocks, never turn your back towards the sea and always wear a lifejacket
8. If in doubt, stay out!
9. If you see someone in trouble in the water, call 111 and ask for Police **as they have a direct line to us.**
10. Be sun smart – Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap. Protect your skin and eyes from the sun's damaging rays

Beach Safety Messages (short)

1. Choose a lifeguarded beach and swim between the flags
2. Ask a lifeguard for advice as conditions can change



3. Don't overestimate your ability
4. Keep young children within arm's reach at all times
5. Never swim or surf alone
6. If caught in a rip current, RELAX and FLOAT, RAISE your hand to signal for help and RIDE the rip until it stops and you can swim safely back to shore.
7. When fishing from rocks, always wear a lifejacket
8. If in doubt, stay out!
9. If you see someone in trouble, call 111 and ask for Police
10. Be sun smart - Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap

RIP CURRENTS

What is a rip current?

Rip currents are caused by interactions between incoming and breaking waves and the shape of the sea bed. As waves travel from deep to shallow water, they eventually break near the shoreline resulting in a build-up of water. One mechanism that returns this water seaward are strong, narrow and often channelized rip currents that flow through the surf zone and some distance beyond.

There are several different types of rip currents – some occupy channels between sandbanks or against headlands and structures and are relatively persistent in location for days, weeks or longer. Others are more unpredictable and respond to large groups of breaking waves and are not channelized. Some rip currents begin by flowing along the beach before turning offshore while others can flow straight offshore. In general, the larger the breaking waves and the more intense the wave breaking, the stronger the rip current flow will be. Although surf under 1 metre can produce rips that flow faster than a good swimmer.

Rip currents also often appear as seemingly calmer and safer areas where wave action is less and appear as enticing areas to enter the water. However, regardless of how fast rip currents flow, they pose a risk to any swimmer in them who may quickly find themselves out of their depth and unable to touch the bottom.

How to identify a rip current?

Look for these features to help you identify a rip:

- Regions of deeper, darker water with less wave breaking activity between areas of white water; think of them as rivers of the sea
- Narrow areas of surface water that is rippled or bumpy with criss-crossed waves compared to areas either side of this section of water.
- Turbulent white water with deposits of sand suspended in the water heading offshore

If you're unsure, stay out!

What to do if you get caught in a rip; **remember the 3 R's**

- **1. RELAX & FLOAT.** Stay calm, relax and float. The rip current will not pull you under the water and is just taking you for a ride offshore. Try to fight the urge to swim back



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to shore against the current; this will use up energy that you need to stay afloat before help arrives. Most people can float for a lot longer than they can swim!

- **2. RAISE YOUR HAND.** Signal for help by calling out and using an arm to attract attention from lifeguards, surfers or someone on the beach who can get help.
- **3. RIDE THE RIP.** Remain floating until the current weakens. Many rips will circulate and bring you back into shallower waters closer to the shore where you may be able to stand

When the current has subsided, and only if you are sure you can swim to the nearest point on the shore, should you attempt to swim to safety. If you choose to attempt to swim out of the rip current, always swim to the side of the rip current and head for regions with a lot of breaking waves and white water.