



Beach Safety

Surf, Sand and Sun

Running from Manly Beach in the south to Palm Beach in the north, this string of golden beaches is home to 21 surf clubs and some of the best surf beaches in the world.

On a hot summer's day the beaches can look harmless enough, but the reality is the surf can be a dangerous place and it must be treated with respect.

Swimming conditions are safest between the red and yellow flags, and you should never swim at a beach that is not patrolled by surf lifesavers.

Stay safe this summer by following these tips:

- ✓ Always swim under supervision
- ✓ Read and obey the signs
- ✓ If you are unsure of surf conditions, ask a lifesaver
- ✓ Don't swim directly after a meal
- ✓ Don't swim under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- ✓ Never run and dive in the water - even if you have checked before, water conditions can change.
- ✓ If you get into trouble in the water, stay calm. Signal for help, float and wait for assistance
- ✓ Learn how to recognise a rip and keep clear of it. A rip can be detected by sand-coloured or rippled water running out to sea. The waves may also be larger and breaking further out to sea on both sides of the rip.

Just remember the F-L-A-G-S

- F** Find the flags and swim between them
- L** Look at the safety signs
- A** Ask a surf lifesaver for advice
- G** Get a friend to swim with you
- S** Stick your hand in the air if you are in trouble

Rips

A rip is a strong current running out to sea. A rip usually occurs when a channel forms between the shore and a sandbar, and large waves have built up water which then returns to sea, causing a drag effect. The larger the surf, the stronger the rip. Rips are dangerous as they can carry a weak or tired swimmer out into deep water.

Identifying a Rip

The following points will alert you to the presence of a rip:

- ✓ darker colour, indicating deeper water
- ✓ murky brown water caused by sand stirred up off the bottom
- ✓ smoother surface with much smaller waves, alongside white water (broken waves)
- ✓ waves breaking further out to sea on both sides of the rip
- ✓ debris floating out to sea
- ✓ a rippled look, when the water around is generally calm

Escaping from a Rip

If you are caught in a rip:

- ✓ Don't Panic - stay calm
- ✓ If you are a strong swimmer, swim at a 45 degree angle across the rip and in the same direction as the current until you reach the breaking wave zone, then return to shore
- ✓ If you are a weak or tired swimmer, float with the current, don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore for about 30 - 40m until you reach the breaking wave zone, then swim back to shore or signal for help.
- ✓ Remember to stay calm and conserve your energy.