

# Sneaker Waves Safety Tips

Sneaker waves are large waves that seem to come out of nowhere. Sneaker waves can catch you off guard and quickly pull you into the ocean where survival is unlikely because of strong currents, turbulent surf, and very cold water. **Don't be fooled by an ocean that looks calm: There can be 30 minutes of small waves right before a sneaker wave strikes.** Follow these guidelines to stay safe at the coast.

**Choose your beach well.** Steep beaches are particularly dangerous because the force of the ocean waves can reach much farther up the beach and pull you into the surf. Steep beaches also have coarse sand that washes out from under your feet making it hard to resist being pulled into the water. Flatter beaches are much better choices.

**Avoid Rocks and Jetties.** Rocks and jetties can give a false sense of security but sneaker waves can overtop them without warning.

**Stay Back.** Stay much farther back from the water than you might think is necessary. Sneaker waves often reach well into the dry sand part of a beach. And remember that rising tides can cause sneaker waves to wash even farther up a beach, and can cut off access around headlands.

**Never turn your back on the ocean.** The most dangerous thing you can do is to be near the surf with your attention diverted, but some beach activities require you to do exactly this. If you participate in such an activity, such as surf fishing, consider wearing a life vest to give yourself a fighting chance of surviving if you do get pulled in.

**Don't go in after dogs.** Dogs that are pulled into the surf almost always get out on their own while their human rescuers usually do not...so stay on dry land and wait for them to swim back to shore.

**Call 911.** Don't go into the water after a person who gets pulled into the surf. Remember that you will likely also get in trouble so that when rescuers do arrive they will have to divide their time between multiple victims. It's much better to call 911 and be prepared to guide rescuers to the person in trouble.

**Share this message.** Share this water safety message with your family and especially children. Also share it with friends and co-workers. Even engage perfect strangers if you see them doing something dangerous.