

Point Reyes National Seashore



Enjoying the Beach Safely

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Tips to stay safe while enjoying the coast

A respect and understanding of the power of the ocean will help keep you safe while enjoying the rugged beauty of the California coastline.

Play it safe. Plan ahead.

- Expect sneaker waves.
- Always face the water while on the beach and always keep an eye on the incoming waves.
- Stay as far away from the ocean as your activities allow. Wet sand makes walking easier but puts you at higher risk. Choose to sit or picnic higher up on the dry sand well away from the ocean but away from the base of cliffs.
- Life jackets are lifesavers. Wear a life vest during activities that require you to be on the beach with your attention diverted, such as fishing or tidepooling.
- Watch for High Surf Advisories issued by the National Weather Service, but remember that sneaker waves can occur anytime—even when the forecast calls for small waves.
- Check the tides before you go. Know when high tide occurs. High tides put you at greater risk while on the beach.

For More Information

Weather Forecast, Storm and High Surf Advisories

Recorded forecast: 831-656-1725
<https://weather.gov/mtr/>

Tide Tables

Check tide tables at park visitor centers.
Tide tables on line:
<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/>

Earthquakes & Tsunamis

Earthquake Notification Service (ENS) is a customizable system provided free to anyone.
<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/ens/>
<https://ntwc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Weather Radio

The best way to stay informed on changing coastal weather conditions is to carry a NOAA Weather Radio. They're inexpensive and available at most electronics stores.

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National Park Service
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Point Reyes Station, CA 94956



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service

Beware of Sneaker Waves

Even on relatively calm days, large sneaker waves can strike without warning. Sneaker waves surge high up on the dry sand with enough force to knock you down and drag you into the ocean—where you risk serious injury or death from the combination of numbing cold water, turbulent surf and rip currents.

Don't turn your back on the ocean!

Watch for Rising Tides

Rising tides cause waves to wash farther and farther up the beach and make it even easier to be caught off guard by a sneaker wave. They can also cut off hiking trails around headlands forcing you to walk dangerously close to the surf.

Tsunami Hazards

If you feel an earthquake on the coast, no matter how small, immediately move to high ground or inland. Go to an area 100 feet above sea level or two miles inland away from the coast.



If you go into the water, whether on purpose or by accident, you may find yourself in trouble.

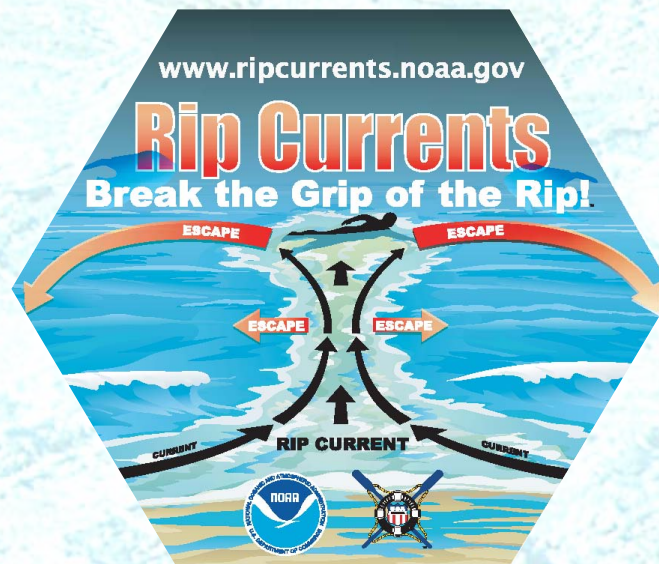
Stay calm. You will make better decisions and save your strength.

Call for help. Yell to catch the attention of someone on shore.

If you can, swim slowly and steadily to the beach.

Rip currents are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. They typically extend from the shoreline, through the surf zone, and past the line of breaking waves. Rip currents can occur at any beach with breaking waves.

If caught in a RIP CURRENT, don't fight the current; swim out of the current and then to shore. If you can't escape, float or tread water.



Keep Your Kids Safe

Talk to children about beach safety.

- Put life vests on children if they are going to be in or near the water.
- Keep a constant watch on children and the waves.
- Keep children close to adults.
- Move everyone away from the water if waves become larger.

Additional Safety Tips

Please stay on established trails. Taking short cuts along coastal cliffs or climbing up from beaches is dangerous and can be fatal due to steepness and loose rock. Avoid the base of cliffs due to the possibility of falling rocks.

Beware of poison oak, common along trails and bluffs. Depending on the season, the leaves may be green, red, or woody reddish twigs.

Lyme disease may be transmitted by the western black-legged tick which is found at Point Reyes. If you feel you have been exposed, contact a physician.

Let someone know where you are going and don't go alone. A companion may be your guarantee of safety or rescue.