



How does the moon affect the tides?

The moon influences our tides. It exerts a gravitational force on the water masses of our oceans. During full moon, high tides are higher and low tides are lower than usual. We call this a spring tide.

The Spring tides are natural conditions that bring with them stronger than normal currents and stronger than normal rip currents along the entire coastline particularly in between the high and low tide but mostly when high tides reach their two daily peaks and turn moving back towards low tide.

At the point where high tide turns is usually when currents and rip currents are most severe but stronger than normal currents and rip currents are experienced throughout the period.

Rip Currents and strong tidal backwash currents are mostly found where estuaries enter the sea; at river mouths; alongside where islands jut out into the sea; alongside where man made land juts out into the sea; alongside where rocks jut out into the sea; alongside harbour walls and jetties; at beaches. Extreme caution should be exercised by anglers, paddlers and bathers and anyone using the sea.

The warning is also issued to be aware of rocks or islands that may be cut off from mainland during the high tides.

High tide and low tide are each experienced twice over a 24 hour period. The tide times can be found in daily newspapers or a tide timetable can be purchased from news agencies.

When a person is caught in a rip current or strong tidal backwash current you will feel that you are being rapidly swept out to sea. Don't panic and don't try to swim against the current that is taking you out to sea as it will only tire you out. Stay afloat by moving your arms and legs in a circular kicking motion, using the air in your lungs for buoyancy. Wave towards shore and call out for help but let the current take you. At the first opportunity swim parallel to the shoreline and once free of the rip swim back to shore using the incoming waves.

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