



Tides and Waves:

- Always check the tide before you enter the water. It is important to be constantly aware of tides and waves when you are in, or close to, the sea.
- Waves are formed by the wind blowing across the surface of the sea. The longer the wind blows, the bigger the waves will be. How steeply a beach shelves will also affect the size and type of wave.

Rip Currents:

Rips are strong currents running out to sea that can easily take swimmers from shallow water out beyond their depth. They are responsible for a large number of drownings each year. Powerful in large surf, also found around river mouths, estuaries and man-made structures.

Spotting a rip current:

It's not easy to identify a rip current, but here are some common signs to look out for:

- Discoloured, brown water (caused by sand being stirred up from the seabed)
- Foam on the water's surface
- A break in the surf line where there are no waves, or the waves are not as big
- Debris floating out to sea
- A rippled patch of sea, when the water around is generally calm

Getting out of trouble:

- Do not panic – stay calm
- Keep hold of your body board, surfboard or inflatable and don't fight the rip
- Signal that you need help – raise your hand and shout for help
- Try and swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the rip current, then swim towards shore
- Never swim directly towards shore, against the rip current – it will exhaust you.
- If you can stand up, wade instead of swimming.

Man-made hazards:

Never swim or play near man-made hazards like piers, harbour walls, breakwaters, outflow pipes and sea defences. Conditions around these structures are changeable – with rips, undertows, large breaking waves and unpredictable wake from passing vessels.

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