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# Press Release

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## **Loss of Lives Due To Rip Currents Can Be Avoided**

Recently the U. S. Coast Guard was called out to save a young swimmer caught in the dangerous conditions caused by rip currents or rip tides in Pacifica, California. A Coast Guard rescue helicopter and rescue boat were dispatched to the scene where a Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer was dropped from the rescue helicopter into the water and assisted the swimmer into a safety harness. The swimmer was then hoisted to safety.

As spring approaches and temperatures start to rise the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary reminds beach goers that such currents can be extremely dangerous, dragging swimmers away from the beach and leading to death by drowning when they attempt to fight the current and become exhausted. According to the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) rip currents cause approximately 100 deaths annually in the United States, more than all other natural hazard except heat and floods. Over 80% of rescues by surf beach lifeguards are due to rip currents totaling 18,000 lifeguard rescues a year.

### **Tips on How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents:**

#### **First and foremost learn how to swim!**

- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.

- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1 . Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape. **Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.**

*The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the United States Coast Guard. It was founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and re-designated as the Auxiliary in 1941. More than 29,000 members donate millions of hours annually in support of Coast Guard missions. For more information on the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, visit us at <http://www.cgaux.org/> or <http://www.auxpa.org/> .*

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