



**Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current, then to shore.**

**Sediment flowing out of the river mouth of Pago Bay shows the extent of the rip current.**



**Rip currents flow faster than an Olympic swimmer!**

**What are rip currents?**

- Rip currents are currents of water flowing away from shore.
- Rip currents are quite common and can be found in reef channels, along the reef flats and at river mouths.
- Rip currents can form near man-made structures such as jetties and piers.

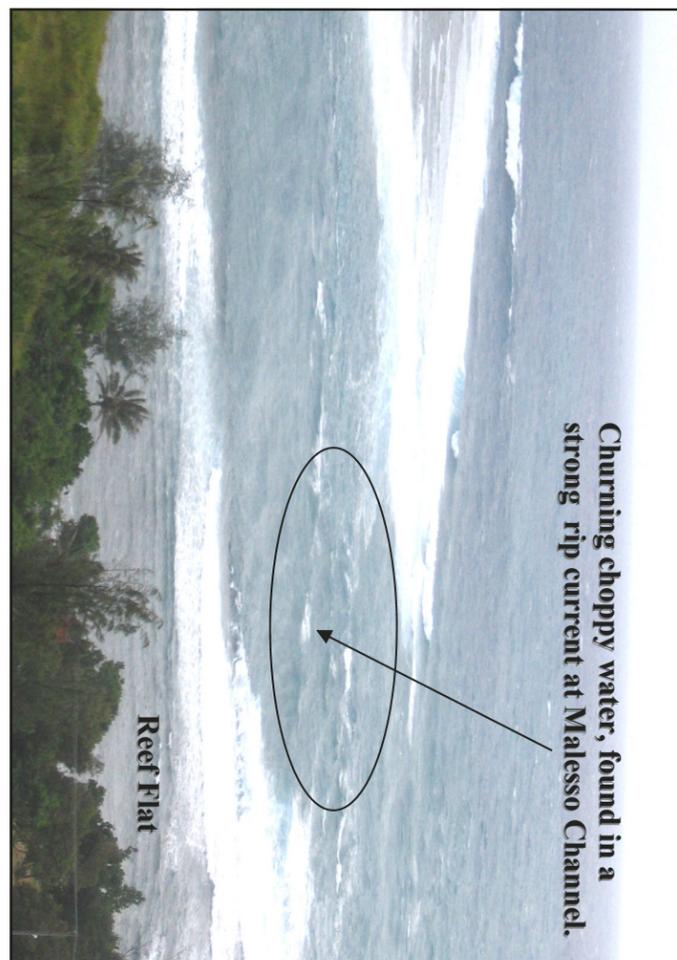
**Why are rip currents dangerous?**

- Rip currents can pull people away from shore and out past the reef line.
- Rip current speeds can vary from moment to moment and can quickly increase to become dangerous to anyone entering the surf.
- Rip currents can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.
- Rip currents can feel stronger below the surface of the water, knocking you off your feet.

**Rip currents form near man-made structures like the jetty at Agana Boat Basin.**



- Rip currents are often difficult to see, but here are some clues of their presence:
- A channel in the reef.
- A channel of churning, choppy water.
- A difference in water color.
- A line of sea foam, sea grass or other debris such as coconuts, palm fronds or trash moving seaward.
- If the surf is big, there are most likely dangerous rip currents.



- Where can I get more information about rip currents?**
- Check the latest National Weather Service forecast for beach conditions. This forecast is in the Surf Zone Forecast and available by dialing 2-1-1, or at the following website: <http://www.phh.noaa.gov/guam/>
  - Ask on-duty lifeguards about rip currents and any other hazards that may be present.
  - More general information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites: <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov> <http://www.usla.org>
- Contributors:**
- NOAA's National Weather Service
  - University of Guam, Sea Grant Program
  - Guam Visitors Bureau
  - Department of Parks & Recreation



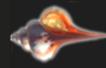
# ESCAPE THE GRIP OF THE RIP TO AVOID THE GRIEF OF THE REEF!

**An Informative Brochure about the Dangers of Rip Currents on Guam**



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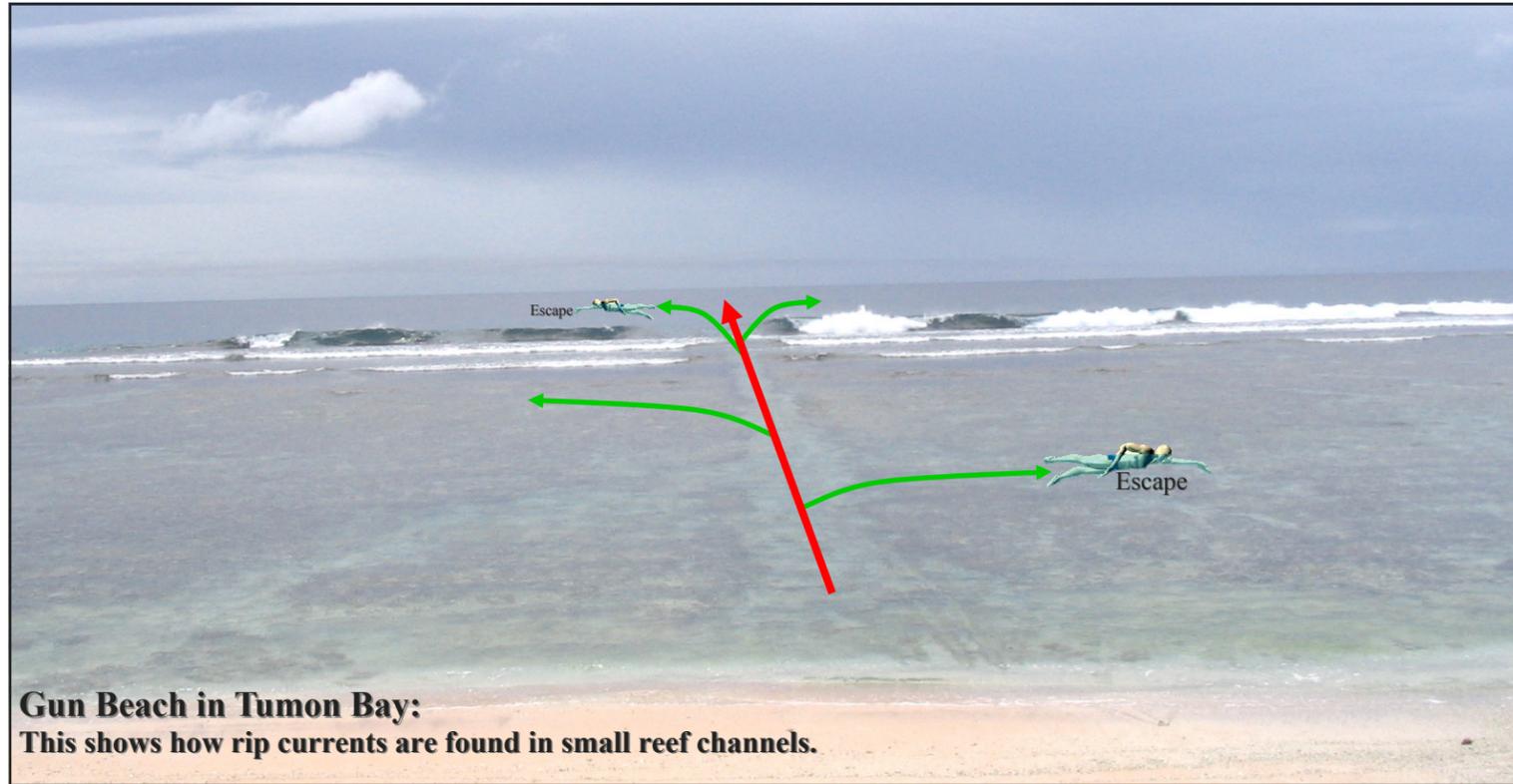
# Rip currents account for 80% of rescues performed by beach lifeguards.

## What if I'm caught in a rip current?

- Stay calm. Don't fight the current; you will lose all your strength.
- Escape the current by swimming in a direction that follows the coastline. When over the shallow reef flat, walk or swim to shore.
- If unable to escape by swimming, float or tread water. When the current weakens, swim toward the reef flat where the water is shallow.
- If at any time you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, call or wave for help.

## How do I help someone else?

- **Don't become a victim while trying to help someone else!** Many people have died in efforts to rescue rip current victims.
- Get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not present, yell instructions to the swimmer on how to escape.
- If possible, throw the rip current victim something that floats or a rope.
- Call 9-1-1 for further assistance. Always remember exactly where you were when you last saw the victim.

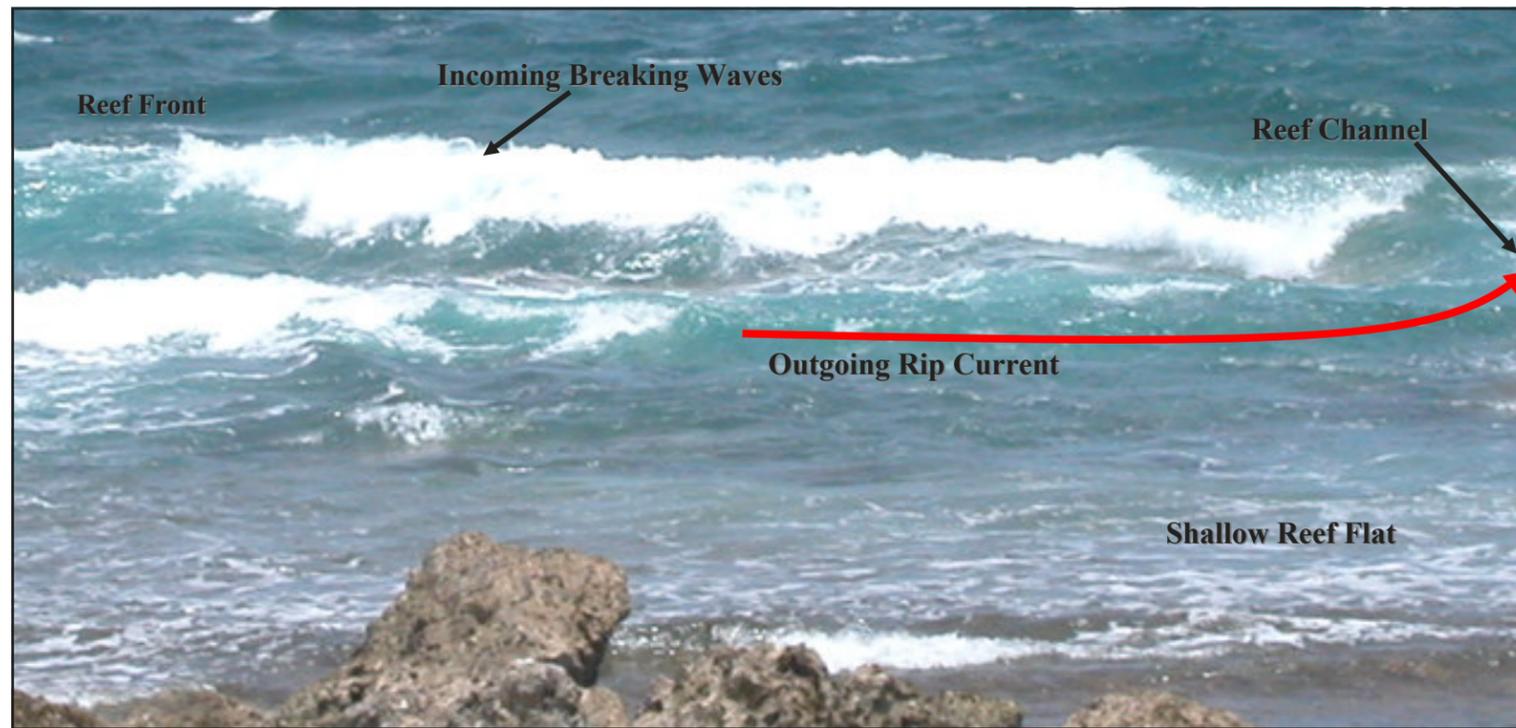


**Gun Beach in Tumon Bay:**  
This shows how rip currents are found in small reef channels.

## Safety tips:

- Know how to swim and never swim alone!
- For maximum safety, swim near a lifeguard.
- Obey instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- Always swim with a flotation device. Wear reef walking shoes so you can walk over the reef out of harm's way.
- Be cautious at all times: If in doubt, don't go out!
- Swim out of the rip current before you are pulled out past the reef line.
- Always tell someone of your next water adventure; where you're going, when you'll be back, and who you're with.

## Look for Safety Flags and Signs at Beaches



## Facts about rip currents;

- Rip current speeds vary. Average speeds are 1-2 feet per second, but they have been measured as fast as 8 feet per second—faster than an Olympic swimmer!
- Rip currents are usually anchored in reef channels and in river mouths.
- Usually rip currents end just beyond the line of breaking waves; however, they may continue to pull hundreds of yards offshore.
- Rip currents do not pull people under water—they pull people away from shore.
- Rip currents are not “undertows” or “riptides”. These improper terms should not be used to describe them.
- Rip currents are strengthened when the tide is going out.



**If caught in a rip current, don't fight it. Stay calm, and swim parallel to shore until you escape the current.**