

Safety in the Ocean

- **What is a rip current?**

A rip current, or a rip tide, is strong channel of water that flows away from the shoreline. Rip currents can occur in any location where there are waves. They can flow long distances, short distances, or form a pattern of disappearing and reappearing. They can have so much power that they can drag you out to sea within seconds and it can be impossible to fight them. Even strong and experienced swimmers can get in serious trouble when caught in a rip tide. Playa Dominical has some of the strongest rip tides in Costa Rica so please take the time to learn about them so that you can safely enjoy the ocean.

- **How do rip currents work?**

Rip currents occur when water comes toward the shore from different directions. The water is pushed towards the sides until it finds a place to exit back out to sea. This is when the rip current forms power and when most people get caught and dragged to sea. These currents form sandbars and trenches in the sand, transforming them in to potentially deadly tramps. They can move you from waist deep to neck deep water in a matter of seconds.

**** See rip tide diagram next page****

- **How to identify a rip current?**

From the beach you can see a rip tide when there is lines or bumps in a section of the water. The water may change color because the current is removing sand in its way from the bottom of the ocean. In the water you can feel it when it is trying to pull you away from shore or to the sides (this is the best time to move out of it). You can feel a rip tide when the sand is “soft” or unstable.

- **How to get out of a to get out of a rip current:**

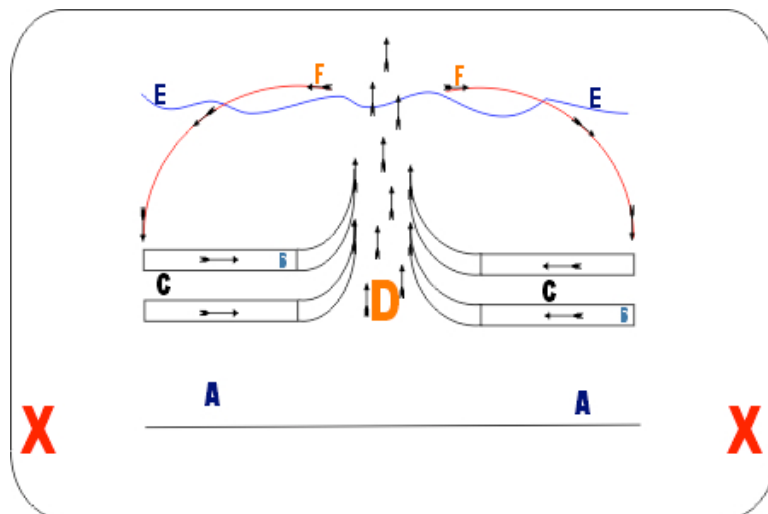
- **Do NOT panic.** Try stay calm and relaxed.
- **Never** fight against the rip. Rips are very strong and it will make you very tired. This can lead to exhaustion and drowning. Let take you to a calmer spot (usually the outside).

- If you **can swim**, swim at a diagonal to the shore so you will not get stuck in the rip again. Remember that a rip is like a triangle and the current will try to take you back out again.
- If you **cannot swim** try to float on your back and wave or call for help.

Tips and Recommendations:

- If you **are being rescued** DO NOT grab the rescuer. Grab the floating device (Lifeguard tube or surfboard), then listen to instructions on how are you going to be moved to shore.
- **Never** swim alone!
- If **there are lifeguards** ask them where the safe spots to swim are under their supervision.
- If **waves are too big do not go out!** The ocean is stronger than you and it can be dangerous even with lifeguards present.

Graphic 1: How rip tides work.



SYMBOLOLOGY

A..... BEACH

B..... CURENT

C..... SANDBAR

D..... RIP TIDE

E.....IMPACT ZONE (BIGGER WAVES BRAKING)

F..... BEST WAY TO GET OUT OF A RIP (SIDEWAYS AT A DIAGONAL)

X..... LIFEGUARD TOWER

Remember that our wish is your enjoyment so please respect the ocean and its' beauty by following these recommendations so you will have a great time in our country and our town. Thank you very much!

Costa Rica Surf Camp
www.crsurfschool.com