

Longfellow's Tips on Currents and Dams

Types of Currents and How to Escape Them

River Rapid

What it is: White water, fast-moving water; unpredictable.

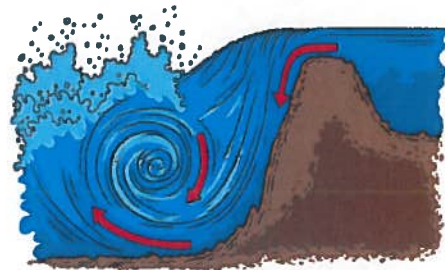
How to escape: Roll over onto your back and go downstream feetfirst to avoid hitting your head. Back paddle with the arms and try to steer away from the main current. Once out of the main current, swim or wade directly toward shore. Because of the current, this will result in a slightly downstream path.



Hydraulic Current

What it is: A strong force created by water flowing downward over an object and then reversing its flow. The reverse flow can trap and hold a person underwater.

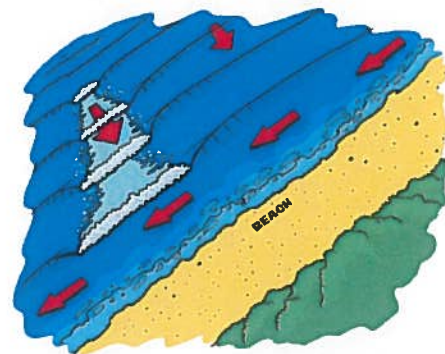
How to escape: Swim to the bottom and get into the downstream current. Then reach the surface.



Longshore Current

What it is: A longshore current moves along the shore, carrying a swimmer farther down the beach.

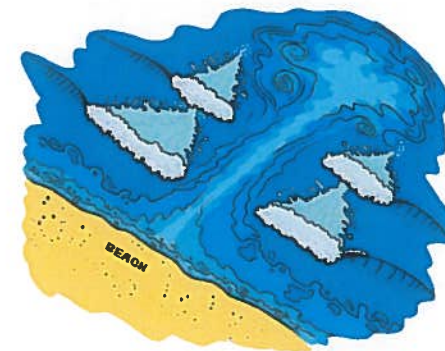
How to escape: Try to swim toward shore while moving along with the current. You will eventually get to shore, although you may be some distance from where you entered the water.



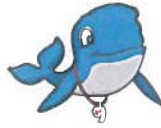
Rip Current

What it is: A rip current moves straight out to sea beyond the breaking waves. Rip currents can carry a swimmer into deep water.

How to escape: Swim along the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward the shore.



Continued on next page



Longfellow's Tips on Currents and Dams

Dams

- No dam is ever safe. Never swim or boat near a dam.
- A dam is a barrier built across a river, stream or creek to control the flow of water.
- Some dams can create powerful hydraulic currents. Boats and canoes have been caught in such hydraulic currents.
- When floodgates open, the water level can rise quickly below the dam and can create a dangerous wall of water.
- The current created when the dam is opened can pull anyone or anything (including boats) above the dam into danger.
- Always check out rivers and lakes before swimming or boating so you won't find yourself too close to a dam.
- Obey warning signs and warning signals immediately.

