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PHUKET
OCEAN
SAFETY
GUIDE

PRACTICE SAFE-SURF WITH THE FIRST-EVER

PHUKET OCEAN SAFETY GUIDE®



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+PHUKET
OCEAN SAFETY



CURRENTLY USED OCEAN SAFETY SYMBOLS BY THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

WATER SAFETY FLAGS USED IN PHUKET



RED + YELLOW FLAG
Patrolled area - the safest swimming area



YELLOW FLAG
Warning - potentially dangerous condition



RED FLAG
Beach closed - do not enter the water



RED + YELLOW FLAG
มีเจ้าหน้าที่ Lifeguard คอยดูแล
ควรเล่นน้ำบริเวณนี้



YELLOW FLAG
ควรระมัดระวังในการเล่นน้ำบริเวณนี้



RED FLAG
ปิดหาด ห้ามลงเล่นโดยเด็ดขาด

WATER SAFETY SYMBOLS USED IN PHUKET



STRONG CURRENT - RIP CURRENT



PATROLLED BEACH



NO SWIMMING



อันตราย - ร่องน้ำลึก



หาดนี้มีเจ้าหน้าที่ Lifeguard คอยดูแล



ห้ามลงเล่นน้ำ

ON PHUKET BEACHES WITH LIFEGUARDS

- Phuket and the Andaman Coast can have surf at anytime of the year, so it is always advised to observe the ocean for at least 15 minutes before entering water.
- Say hello to the lifeguards before you swim.
- Swim near a lifeguard if you can.
- As conditions change regularly, ask the lifeguards about the ocean conditions
- Read and observe the safety signs.
- Swim between the red/yellow banded flags (they mark the safest and lifeguarded areas).
- Swim under supervision or with a friend.
- If you get caught in a rip at a patrolled beach, do not panic. Float with the rip and raise one arm for assistance.
- Don't swim in the SURF under the influence of alcohol!

ON PHUKET BEACHES WITHOUT LIFEGUARDS

There may not be lifeguards at all beach all the time, so be extra careful early mornings, late evenings, or at any unguarded beaches

- Be extra careful and observe the area first for at least 15 minutes.
- Watch the ocean closely to see if there is any SURF—how and where the waves are breaking?
- Don't go in the surf alone; make sure that friends or family are watching.
- If you see someone in trouble and you plan to respond, make sure that you take something that floats with you.

Phuket and the Andaman Coast can have surf at anytime of the year, so it is always advised to observe the ocean for at least 15 minutes before entering water.

BE EXTRA CAREFUL
WATCH FOR WAVES BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER
DON'T GO IN THE SURF ALONE

KNOW THAT

- Conditions change quickly in Phuket, especially when tides change and during the surf season.
- Individuals without ocean/surf experience who respond to a drowning person without a floatation devise often find themselves in trouble.

The purpose Phuket Ocean Safety Guide is to promote water safety awareness and to provide appropriate Water Safety information to tourists, foreign residents, and the greater Thai community.

If you get caught in a rip at a patrolled beach, do not panic. Float with the rip and raise one arm.

SAY HELLO TO THE LIFEGUARDS BEFORE YOU SWIM
SWIM NEAR A LIFEGUARD IF YOU CAN



WHAT IS A RIP CURRENT?

A rip current is any ocean current occurring close to the shore which can take a swimmer out to sea

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- If you get caught in a rip at a patrolled beach—do not panic—and float with the rip and raise one arm.
- If the rip takes you out to sea—relax and float with the rip—then let the waves push you back to shore.
- Swim parallel with the beach—then use the waves—let the waves push you to shore.
- Relax, float, and use a sidestroke or backstroke.
- If waves break in front of you, hold your breath and go under them. Anticipate that the waves will keep coming (take a breath and go under the wave, then surface and take another breath and go under the next wave, etc.)

WAVES AT PHUKET BEACHES

- **SPILLING BREAKERS**
- **PLUNGING BREAKERS**
- **SURGING BREAKERS**

Waves types are constantly changing, even from hour to hour at the very same beach. Watch out for the 3 types of waves most common to Phuket.

The following photographs taken at Phuket beaches illustrate the 3 wave types on the west coast



SPILLING BREAKERS AT KATA BEACH

Spilling breaker

A wave that breaks gradually over a considerable distance.

Caution

- Occur during strong on-shore wind conditions, especially during the Southwest Monsoon.
- Surf may not appear dangerous, yet strong rip currents may exist.

PLUNGING BREAKER AT KATA NOI BEACH

Plunging breaker

Tend to curl over and break with a single crash (good for surfing!)
Plunging waves may create 'tubes' and 'barrels'!

Caution

- Dangerous shorebreak!
- When surf occurs during the high season and sand bars are near shore (April is most notorious month).
- Kata Noi and Nai Harn Beach



SURGING BREAKER AT NAI HARN BEACH

Surging breaker

Waves that peak (stand up), but surge up the beach without spilling or plunging.

Caution

- May have a strong and unexpected surge up the beach.
- High 'run up' level on the exposed beach.
- Potential to knock a person off balance and drag them into the shorebreak.



PHUKET TOURISTS-PLEASE WATCH AND TAKE CARE REGARDING HAZARDOUS COASTAL CURRENTS ON OUR PHUKET BEACHES!

See Maps A—D correspond to the ocean currents described below

PERMANENT OR HEADLAND CURRENTS

Rip currents occurring near headlands—Permanently occurring currents which increase relational to the incoming surf on any given day.

For example: the southern end of Kata Beach and the northern end of Kata Noi Beach.

See: Map C—Kata & Kata Noi Beaches

FIXED CURRENTS

Fixed currents generally occur around the same area and move in the same direction from day to day.

For example: all beaches! **See: Map A—Surin Beach & Map B—Karon Beach**

FLASH CURRENTS

Flash currents may occur suddenly after a series of waves, especially during periods of mixed swell types and on high tides.

For example: All beaches! **See: Red arrows indicating ‘flash rip’ hot-spots**

LONGSHORE CURRENTS

Longshore currents run parallel to the beach & inside of the surf zone (common along the length of long, straight beach), especially during periods of high surf.

For example: Karon Beach all year-round.

Message to our Phuket Tourists

Even the best swimmers and lifesavers from around the world are challenged to recognize coastal currents at surf beaches, especially those that occur unexpectedly after a set of waves break near the beach.

When you see waves and surf at the beach, please stop, think, watch, talk to the lifeguards, and know that there are inherent risks.

