

National Beach Safety Week

By *Helene Forst, Lieutenant
Squad 8, EHVOR*

Chief TJ Calabrese, along with all members of East Hampton Volunteer Ocean Rescue, would like to announce that National Beach Safety Week has been changed to coincide with Rip Current Awareness Week. This year, National Beach Safety Week and Rip Current Awareness Week begins on Sunday, June 4, and ends on June 11, the following Sunday.

Our waters can be a wonderful recreational resource, but they can also be treacherous. Lifeguards are provided in an effort to reduce the number of accidents at our local beaches, but we cannot do the job alone.

An informed public is essential to maintaining adequate levels of beach and water safety. The objective of National Beach Safety Week is to make citizens aware of the need to be safe while in and near the water with special emphasis on the hazards associated with rip currents.

United States Lifeguard Association's Top Ten Safety Tips:

Learn to Swim – Promote the YMCA and the Junior Lifeguard Program.

Swim near a Lifeguard.

Swim with a Buddy.

Check with the Lifeguards on daily conditions.

Obey Posted Signs and Flags – And know your location for 911 calls.

Keep the Beach and Water Clean – What you pack in, pack out!

Learn Rip Current Safety.

Enter Water Feet First.

Wear a Life Jacket when appropriate or mandated.

Use Sunscreen and Drink Plenty of Water.

Beaches and bodies of water do not offer protection from lightning. Every year, lightning strikes and kills people on or near bodies of water. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur during the summer season. As a rule, lightning occurs most frequently

within 10 miles of a thunderstorm, but bolts of lightning can travel as far as 20 miles away from the thunderstorm.

USLA Lightning Safety Guidelines:

“When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”

Stop all activities and seek shelter in a solid building or hard-topped vehicle.

Wait 30 minutes after storm to resume activities.

Rip Currents can be killers. They are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. The greatest safety precaution that can be taken is to recognize the danger of rip currents and always remember to swim at beaches with lifeguards.

Rip Current Survival Tips:

Never Swim alone.

Be cautious at all times. If in doubt, don't go out!

Swim at a lifeguarded beach whenever possible.

Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.

If caught in a rip, remain calm to

conserve energy and think clearly.

Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current, parallel to the shoreline.

If unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim toward shore.

If still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by facing the shore, waving your arms, and yelling for help.

If you see a distressed swimmer, get help from a lifeguard or have someone call 911. Throw the 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 Lifesaving Association (USLA), a national non-profit organization, and your local chapter, Hampton Lifeguard Association (HLA), are dedicated to improving beach safety in America. Check out our website at:

www.easthamptonoceanrescue.org