



Lake Michigan is a terrific place to enjoy a day at the beach. Unfortunately, a day of fun in the sun can quickly turn into a family tragedy. Rapidly changing conditions, an uneven lake floor, dangerous currents, and waves can catch even the most skilled swimmer off guard.

The Southern Lake Michigan Water Safety Task Force is a collaborative effort of municipalities, organizations and individuals promoting the safe and wise use of Lake Michigan waters.

For more information, visit:

slmws.wordpress.com
GreatLakesWaterSafety.org
iiseagrant.org

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**BE SAFE,
HAVE FUN!**

Southern Lake Michigan
Water Safety Task Force

Check the beach forecast before heading to the beach and plan to stay out of the water if dangerous waves or currents are expected.

Beach forecasts and Beach Hazards Statements from the National Weather Service can be found:

www.weather.gov/greatlakes/beachhazards



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For more information, please contact ldorwort@pnw.edu



TIPS TO LIVE BY

- ✓ **Stay dry when waves are high.**
Waves are more powerful than you think and can cause injury. Never put your back to a wave. High, rapidly approaching waves leave little time to resurface if you're knocked over. Dangerous currents are also more likely when waves are higher than 3 feet. Toddlers can be knocked over in 2 foot waves.
- ✓ **Steer clear of the pier.**
Dangerous currents are almost always present near shoreline structures.
- ✓ **Heed warning flags, signs, lifeguards, and beach patrol.**
They are there to keep you safe.
- ✓ **Rock the jacket.**
Don't just bring it, wear it! Lifejackets will keep you afloat if you become exhausted.
- ✓ **Swim sober.**
Water and alcohol are a deadly combination.
- ✓ **Be a water watcher.**
Designate someone to watch kids and the elderly at all times.
- ✓ **Watch your step.**
Sandbars are always moving and can lure you dangerously far from shore. The water may be a few feet deep where you are and as much as 10 feet deep a few steps away.
- ✓ **If in doubt, stay out.**
Not all beaches are swimming beaches. Know the rules!
- ✓ **Know before you go!**
Check local beach and marine forecasts at weather.gov/greatlakes/beachhazards.
- ✓ **Swim near an adult.**
Beaches with lifeguards are the best for safety as are other watchful adults.
- ✓ **Always swim with a buddy.**
Both of you will be safe if there are at least two of you.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Don't be caught off guard. Check the beach forecast before heading to the beach and plan to stay out of the water if dangerous waves or currents are expected.

Beach forecasts and beach hazard statements from the National Weather Service can be found at: www.weather.gov/greatlakes/beachhazards

About Beach Forecasts

The National Weather Service assigns each county a daily "Swim Risk" level during the beach season. As currents strengthen and wave heights build, the risk level goes up.

🚩 High Swim Risk

Large waves and dangerous currents are certain. Conditions are life-threatening. Stay out of the water and stay away from dangerous areas like piers and breakwalls.

🚩 Moderate Swim Risk

Large waves and dangerous currents are likely. Stay away from dangerous areas like piers, breakwalls, and river mouths. Always have a floatation device with you in the water.

🚩 Low Swim Risk

Large waves and dangerous currents are not expected, however dangerous currents may exist at any time near piers, breakwalls, and river mouths.

About Beach Forecasts

Beach hazards statements are issued during high swim risk conditions to give additional information about the hazards expected at the beach, such as the type of currents expected or the height of forecasted waves.



BE CURRENT SMART

Lake Michigan is a hotspot for dangerous currents—over 85 people have drowned in currents since 2002 alone, and hundreds more have been put at risk

Tell-tale signs of a dangerous current

- 👁 High, swiftly moving waves that may appear to be swirling
- 👁 A breakwall, pier, jetty, or river outlet
- 👁 Muddy or sandy looking water moving away from the beach into the lake
- 👁 A break or calm spot in the incoming waves

How to survive if caught in a current

1. Stay calm
2. Swim to the side
3. head for the shore

Shoreline rescue

Many of the fatalities on the Great Lakes were 'would-be rescuers' that jumped into the water to save another person. Use available lifesaving equipment to make the rescue. Also, make sure you know how to describe your location to first responders. Call 911!

If someone is in danger

1. Act Fast
2. Get Help
3. Throw a floatable