

OIST

Open Water Safety Training

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Introduction #1

Okinawa's coastline is beautiful, but dangerous. Rip currents exist in many areas popular for ocean recreation. More than 60% of drownings on Okinawa are due to swimmers being overcome by these dangerous currents. FY2022 saw 106 waterborne accidents, with 40 resulting in a fatal drowning - the highest number in the past decade.

Of 40 fatal drownings in FY2022, 20 of the victims were tourists visiting Okinawa indicating that those unfamiliar with the area are at particularly high risk of an accident. If you are spending time along the coast or in the sea, whether for recreation or as part of field work activities, please be aware of the ocean-related hazards.

Introduction #2

(For your safety)

- **Always be aware of the possibility of water-related accidents. Even after making every effort to be safe, the ocean and other bodies of water can be unpredictable. Poor decision-making in open water can cost you your life.**

(About this training)

- **This training provides a minimum knowledge of water safety.**
- **When engaging in marine recreation, always check local hazard information, weather, and sea conditions on the day of activity to ensure your own safety.**
- **Contents for this training are compiled primarily from public announcements from relevant government agencies and associations.**

Scope

This training applies to anyone wish to enjoy marine activities in Okinawa.

Contents

1. Statistics

- 1.1 Marine Accident Statistics
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1. STATISTICS

1.1 Marine Accident Statistics (Okinawa)

Water-related accidents are rapidly increasing

Statistics on water accidents for FY2022

***Tourists and visitors to the island are at a higher risk**

****This is the highest number of water accidents in the last 10 years**

Number of incidents	Number of victims	Fatalities	Tourist/Visitor Fatalities
106	111	40	20

Okinawa Prefectural Police Okinawa Prefectural Police
<https://www.police.pref.okinawa.jp/docs/2015022200039/>

1.1 Marine Accident Statistics (Okinawa)

Water-related accidents are rapidly increasing

Swimmers and snorkelers account for the far majority of water accident victims in Okinawa.



Swimmers and Snorkelers	Divers	Fishers	Other/Unknown
18	6	3	13

Okinawa Prefectural Police Okinawa Prefectural Police
<https://www.police.pref.okinawa.jp/docs/2015022200039/>

1.2 Marine Accidents at Beaches In Onna village

There are beaches in Onna village where fatalities have occurred.

*A significant number of fatal drownings each year are of those attempting to rescue a swimmer in distress

FAILING TO FOLLOW WARNING SIGNS COULD COST ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE!

Marine accident fatalities reported around OIST			
Cape Manzamo	3	Blue Cave	1
Apogama	7	Seragaki	1
Cape Maeda	5	Kibougaoka Beach	1

*based on public announcements OIST has gathered from June 2016 to October 2022

At Apogama Point, a “Danger Do not Swim!!” sign was installed on 28 October 2022.

Not all dangerous beaches have cautionary signs



1.2 Swimming areas reported to the prefecture as public beaches

As of November 2023, there are over 69 beaches that have submitted notification to the Public Safety Commission. [Safe Marine Leisure](#)
However, not all locations offer a completely safe environment.

Ensure that the following conditions are in place:

- The area where swimmers can swim safely is marked.
- Water rescue personnel is present and available to perform lifesaving in the event of a water accident.
- Life-saving equipment, such as life floats, ropes, lifeboats, etc., are available.

The Season for lifeguards to be on beaches is approximately May 1st to October 31st

2. NATURE

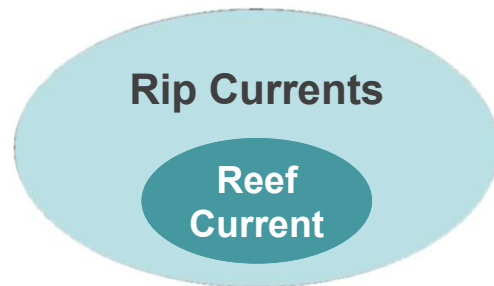
About Okinawa Marine Environment

Due to its unique coastal features and sometimes severe weather, even those knowledgeable about the hazards of ocean recreation in other locations around the world will find Okinawa a challenging ocean environment.

Avoid approaching the coast during a typhoon. Waves and currents are extremely strong and can unexpectedly pull a person in with disastrous results.

Even during normal weather, dangerous currents (e.g., rip currents) may still form.

2.1 Rip Currents and Reef Current



Reef Current is a subtype of Rip Currents

Definition

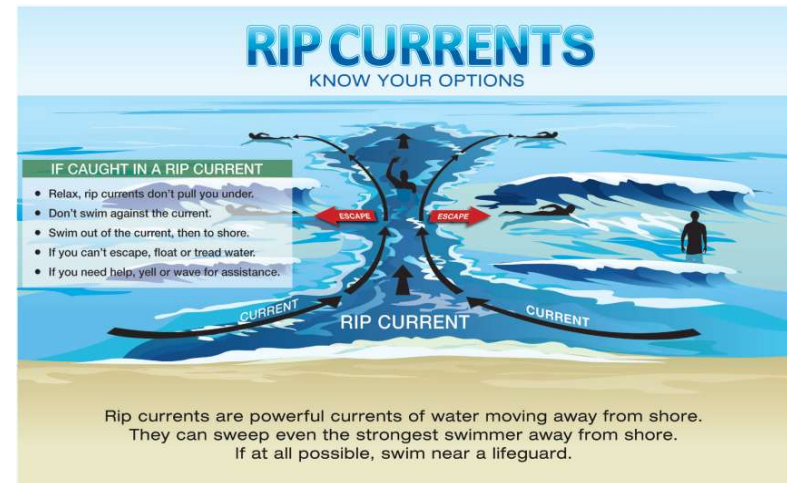
Rip Currents: Offshore current generated on sandy beaches and near jetties as a refuge from incoming waves.

Reef Currents: In the vicinity of coral reefs, a unique offshore current is generated from within the coral reefs.

(Source: <https://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/KAN11/reef/reef-mikiwame.html>)

60% of drowning accidents are caused by rip currents in Japan

(Source: [Japan Lifesaving Association](http://www.jlifa.or.jp/))



<https://www.weather.gov/safety/ripcurrent-signs-brochures>

● SWIM – FLOAT – SWIM

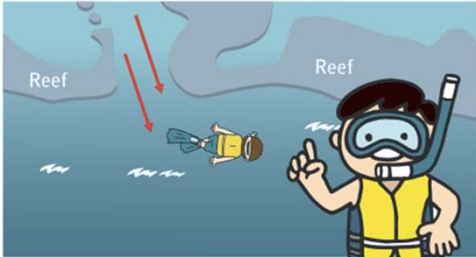
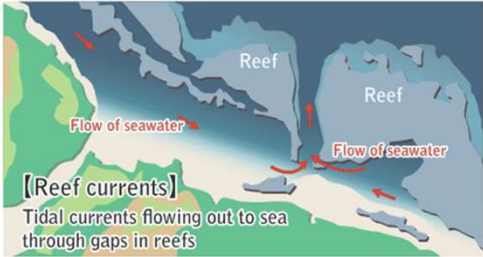
● **If caught:**

- DO NOT swim against the current.
- Stay calm and FLOAT to keep your head above water.
- Swim, if possible, out of the current.
- Use a rested stroke Sidestroke or Backstroke.
- Alternate between swimming and floating to conserve energy.
- Try to position yourself in front of the breaking waves.

2.1 Rip Currents (Reef Currents)

Reef currents

What is a reef current?
It's a strong current that flows out between gaps in a reef. They often occur where a deep channel is formed between coastal reefs.



[Reef currents]
Tidal currents flowing out to sea through gaps in reefs

If you feel yourself being carried out to sea

- 1 Don't swim against the current. Swim parallel to the shore across the current.
- 2 When you get out of the reef current, aim for the nearest land.
- 3 It's best to avoid getting caught in reef currents at all.

The 11th Regional Coast Guard Headquarters and Ishigaki Coast Guard Office provide Okinawa Reef Current information at their websites.

For ocean safety information
▶▶ <https://www6.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/11kanku/kisyu.html>



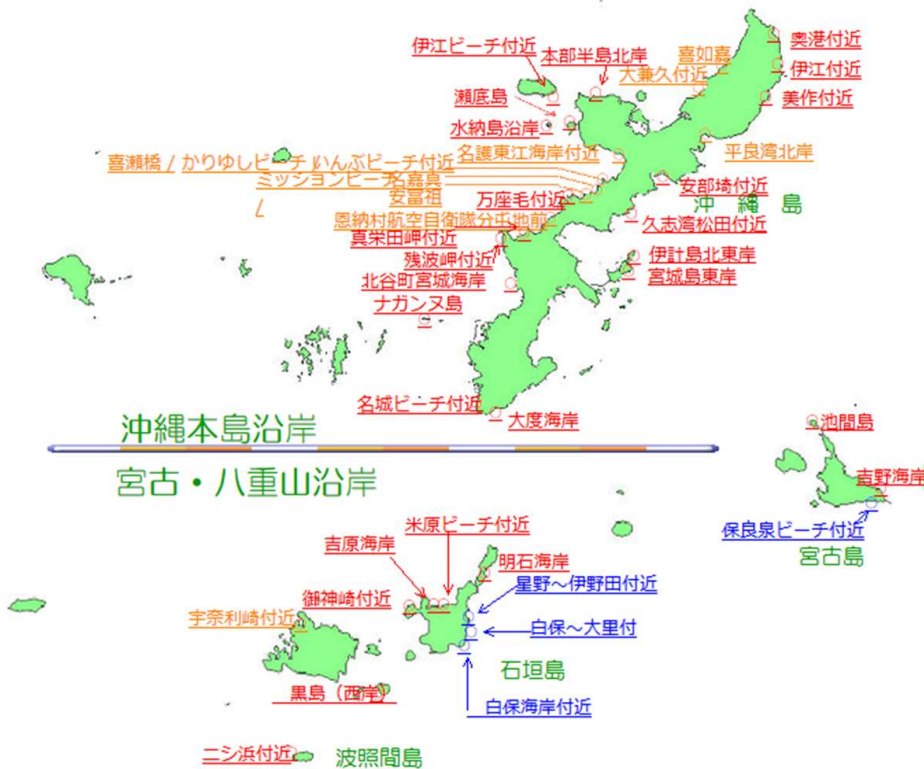
Please be especially careful during marine recreation and swimming, as reef currents may even occur in areas where there are no whitecaps.

“沖縄の海洋情報” 11th Regional Coast Guard Headquarters
<https://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/KAN11/reef/reef-mikiwame.html>

"Safety Guide for Visitors to Okinawa" Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau
https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf

2.1 Rip Currents (Reef Currents)

リーフカレント注意海域を写真で見よう！



Reef Current Caution Area **where reef currents occur** summarized by Japan Coast Guard (11th Region, Okinawa) ([LINK](#)).

- ※ ○赤丸: 過去に水難事故が起こったリーフカレント発生海域
 - 青丸: リーフカレントが発生しそうな海域
 - 燈丸: 十一管区の航空機がリーフカレントの発生を捉えた海域
- なお、上記場所以外にもリーフカレント発生海域は多数あると考えられます。
 空中写真は、下記のURL(海上保安庁海洋情報部)でご覧になれます。
<https://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/>
 (空中写真閲覧サービスをご覧ください)
 海域によっては、下記URLで観測報告書をご覧になれます。
https://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/KAN11/hokoku/top_houkoku.htm

- Red: previously reported rip current sites
- Blue: potential rip current likely to occur
- Orange: where Coast Guard observed rip currents

Satellite **google map** shows you the coral reef. See next page for mechanism for how a rip current works.

2.1 Rip Currents (Reef Currents)

[離岸流について（映像、調査・解析、見つけ方）～長岡技術科学大学 \(nagaokaut.ac.jp\)](#)

<https://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/KAN11/reef/reef-mikiwame.html>

Reef Current Mechanism

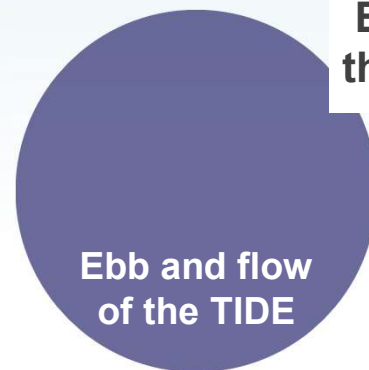
Rip currents are caused by the topography of the sea floor. This phenomena is then affected by 3 conditions; the Ebb and Flow of the 1) TIDE, the heights and interval of the 2) WAVES, and the 3) WIND which moves surface water.

Channels in the sea floor (common in coral reefs) may cause currents to flow faster; thus becoming even more dangerous.



WAVE height and interval

Be aware of these factors



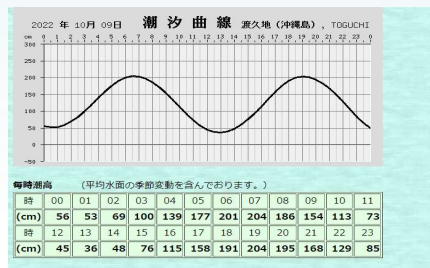
Ebb and flow of the TIDE



WIND blowing from the sea to the land



Corals, structures on the seafloor



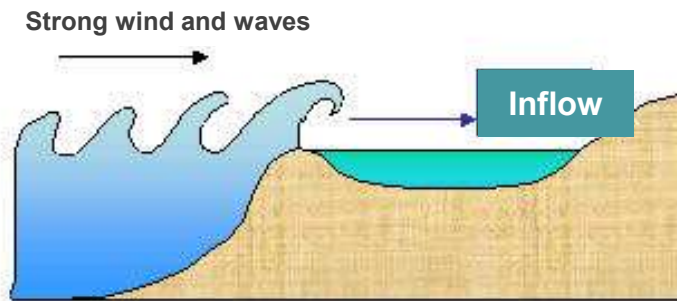
Example of tide chart

[潮汐推算 沖縄県 \(mlit.go.jp\)](#)

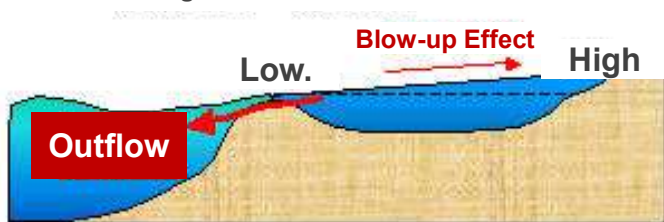
2.1 Rip Currents (Reef Currents)



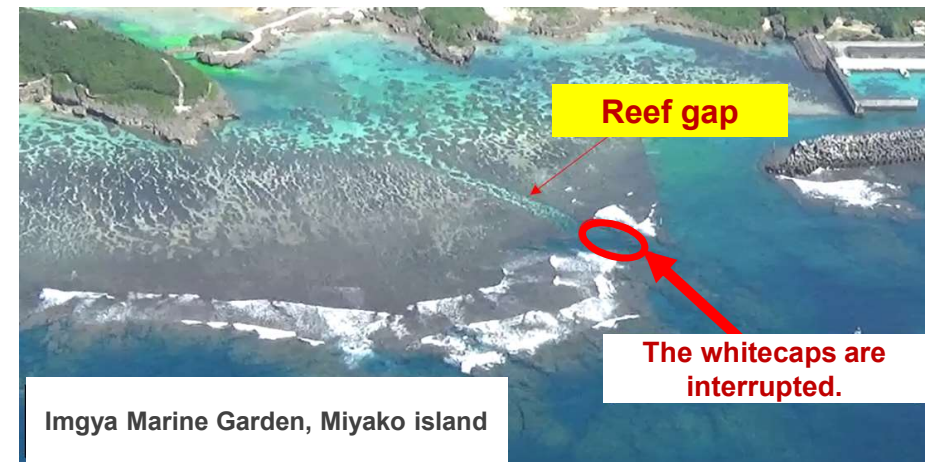
Currents may form at any time due to wind speed. Wind generates waves which enhance currents.



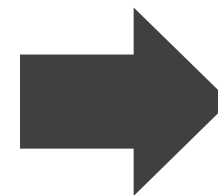
The difference in water levels causes seawater to flow offshore through breaks in the coral reef.



So how can we forecast reef currents?



Imgya Marine Garden, Miyako island



A Good Tip:
Look for breaks in the whitecaps. These areas of calm water between the breaking waves are where reef currents are likely to occur.



A video of a reef current at Apogama

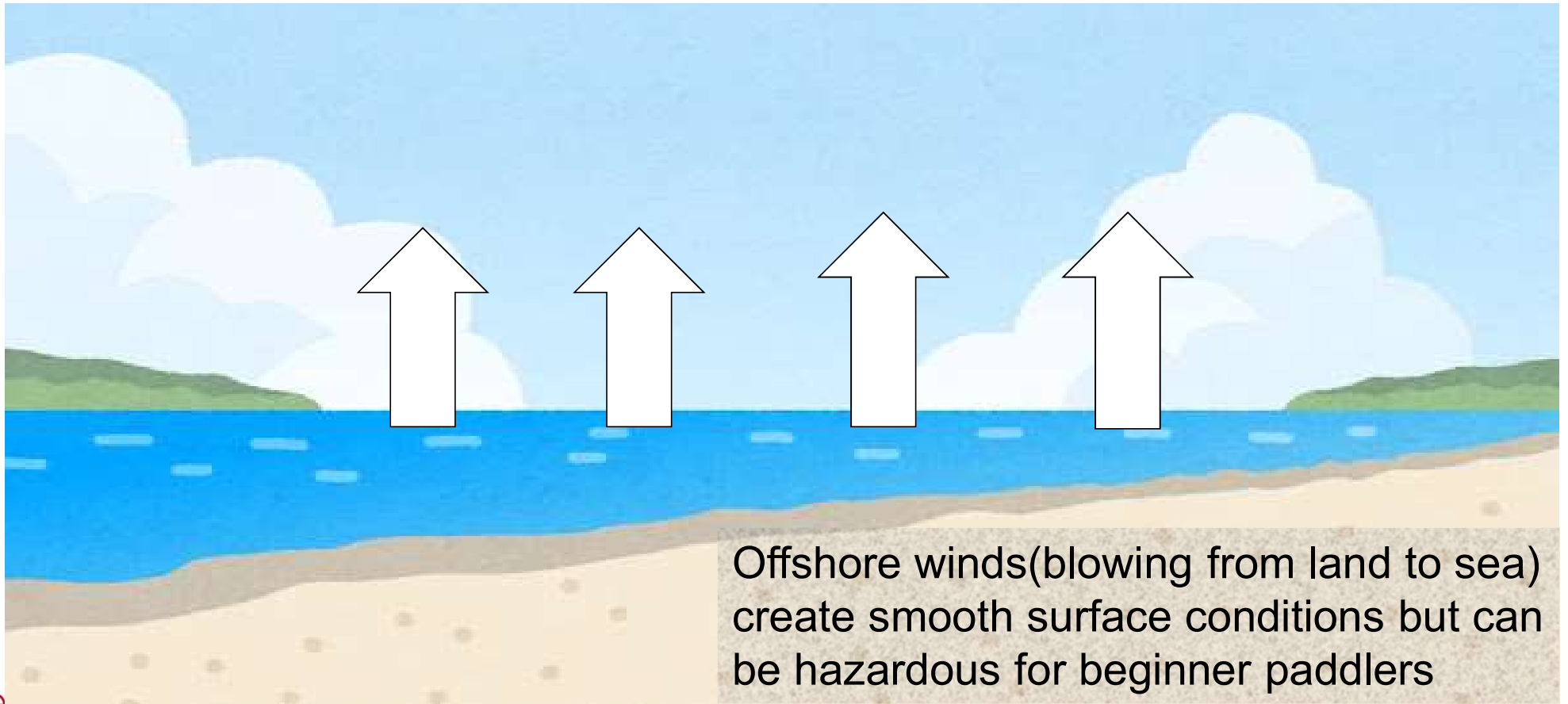
2.2 Wind

Okinawa weather is constantly changing. Winds shift frequently, and rain squalls arrive without warning. When this happens there is a corresponding effect on ocean conditions.

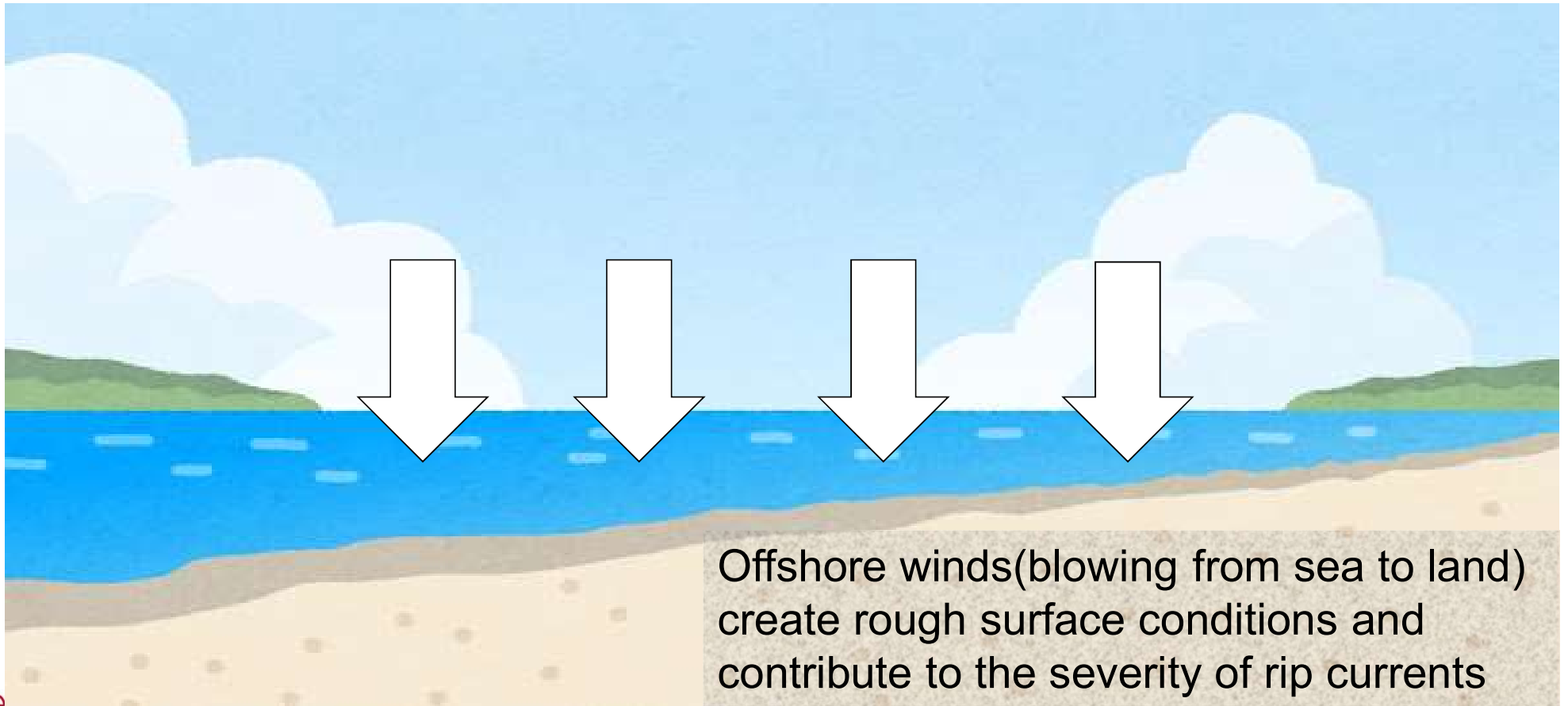
Even when the winds are predictable, they can be a double-edged sword. Offshore winds are a hazard to kayakers and paddleboarders as they can push you out to sea/Onshore winds are a hazard to swimmers and snorkelers as they push surface water to the beach and increase the intensity of rip/reef currents.



Assessing Wind as a Hazard



Assessing Wind as a Hazard



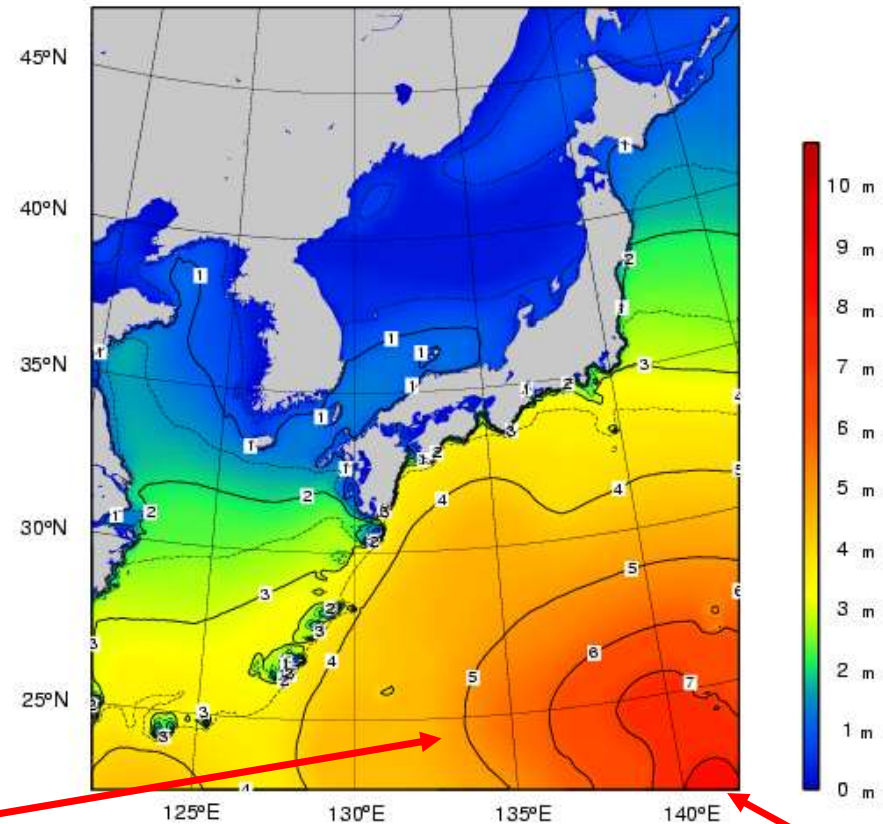
2.3 Rogue Waves (“Doyounami”)

During Okinawa’s summer, large waves are produced by distant storms. As these waves travel a longer distance they gain speed and power. The time (in seconds) between each wave (called wave interval) will also be longer.

While near the coast in summer, understand that long-interval typhoon waves behave differently than short-interval waves common in winter.

During a typhoon swell, waves of 2-4 meters may be observed consistently. But waves of 2 or 3 times that size may appear suddenly every 20 to 30 minutes.

Just when you think you understand the size of the waves, you might be caught off guard by much larger surf.



“Guide to Wave Charts” Japan Meteorological Agency

Typhoon

2.4 Tsunami

When you hear a **Tsunami Alert**



★When you hear a Tsunami Alert★

- Immediately leave the coastal area and run to a high ground or an upper level of a sturdy building.
- Inquire those around you if you do not know where to evacuate. If you are at an accommodation facility, check and see the evacuation route from your room in advance.
- Warn swimmers in the beach to evacuate, and quickly run away from the coast.
- Do not ever approach the sea until the tsunami alert has been completely lifted.



★Check the Elevation★



- At major tourist sites, you will find signs to show the elevation from the sea level.
- Make sure you reach a shelter above sea level as high as possible, when you are evacuated.
- Check the elevation of the place when you are visiting a coastal area.

★Cooperate in Evacuation★

- In case of evacuation, act promptly and follow the instruction of the hotel staff and local people.
- Help evacuate someone who is in need of assistance or ask for help to people nearby.



"Safety Guide for Visitors to Okinawa" Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau
https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf

2.4 Tsunami

Evacuation while at sea (boat, etc.):

Follow instructions by the Coast Guard

If there's enough time to evacuate

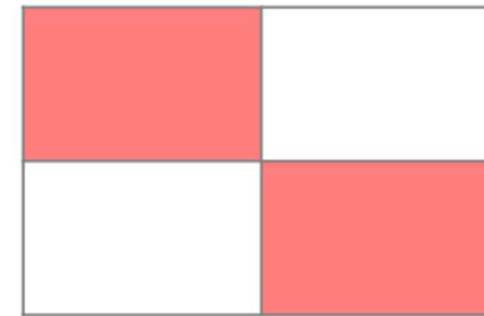
1. dock at the nearest harbor
2. evacuate to the designated tsunami evacuation area or evacuation building



If there's **not** enough time

1. escape offshore as far as possible

Be sure to have a radio to obtain the latest information



International Maritime Flag

You are running into danger

Lifeguard will post this flag onshore

2.5 Weather: Lightning

- ◆ **Postpone activities if unfavorable weather is predicted (especially lightning)**
- ◆ **Sudden change of weather during marine activities**
 - **See lightning = get out of water and evacuate to a building or a car**
 - **Be ready to leave the water if diving or using boats**
- ◆ **Lightning strikes on boats are common**
- ◆ **Lightning is often seen around Okinawa during summer afternoons**

2.5 Weather: Lightning (continued)

Lightning strikes are not uncommon

There have been cases of people who have been struck by lightning during thunderstorms

Date: July 24th, 2016

Location: Bibi Beach, Itoman city

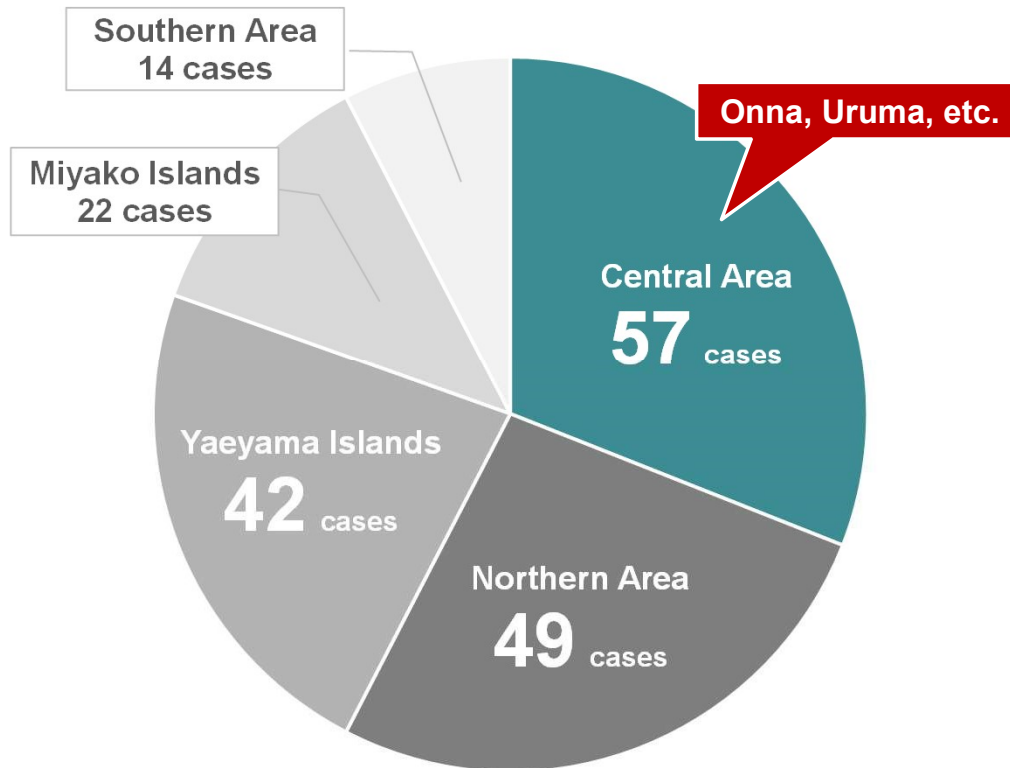
Lightning struck at Bibi Beach in Itoman city, 3 minutes after Thunder Warning. Four adult males were transported to the hospital and one of them was unconscious.

If you are on the beach, immediate evacuation is required to a car or a building, or if you are on the boat, follow the captain's instruction.

Source: <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/gallery/54703>

2.6 Dangerous Marine Creatures

Injuries by marine creatures reported in Okinawa (2018)
184 cases



69 cases (**38%**) caused
by **Box Jellyfish**
(*habu kurage*) *Chironex yamaguchii*

Okinawa Prefecture and local
municipal offices announce **Box
Jellyfish Advisories June 1st ~
September 30th each year.**



"Chiropsalmus quadrigatus" by OpenCage,
CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/com
mons/e/e9/Chiropsalmus_quadrigatus.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e9/Chiropsalmus_quadrigatus.jpg)

First Aid for Box Jellyfish:

- Step 1: Immediately leave the water
Do NOT rub stung area
- Step 2: Pour vinegar liberally on tentacles
- Step 2: Carefully Remove inactivated tentacles
- Step 3: Immerse the injured area in **hot water** to
inactivate the toxins

[View other dangerous marine creatures](#)
(link to Okinawa Prefectural Institute of Health and Environment)

3. ACTIVITY BASED SAFETY

3. Activities

Before participating in marine leisure activities **Assess water conditions thoroughly and consider the potential hazards**, then follow these marine safety tips:

Always wear a life jacket

Choose an appropriately sized life jacket or snorkeling vest.



Carry your phone in a waterproof pouch

The best way to carry your phone is in a waterproof pouch for emergency contact.



Call 118 in An emergency

118 is for Marine Emergencies.



"For the safe enjoyment of the Okinawan sea", <https://www.okinawastory.jp/news/notice/3941>

3.1 Swimming

Drowning and drifting accidents have occurred due to swimming in open water while drinking alcohol.



Alcohol impairs your judgement and reduces your ability to respond to a changing environment. The ocean is dynamic, and conditions are constantly changing. You should have awareness at all times and continually employ risk management when in the water.

If you plan to drink alcohol at the beach, stay on the beach.

3.1 Swimming

Drowning and drifting accidents have occurred due to swimming in uncontrolled waters and drinking alcohol.



Accident Prevention - 6 Points

1. Swim in controlled beaches where lifesavers and lifeguards are on duty.
2. Parents should actively supervise children in the water at all times.
3. Do not swim for 24 hours after drinking alcohol and/or when not feeling well.
4. Do not swim during high waves or strong winds.
5. **Wear a life jacket.**
6. **Bring a survival mirror & safety whistle with you.**

Water Safety Guide

https://www6.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/watersafety/swimming/pdf/leaflet_swimming.pdf

3.2 Snorkeling

Snorkeling

5 safety points

1 It looks easy, but it takes practice

Learn how to use the snorkel, mask and fins.



2 Floating isn't easy

Wear a life jacket and wetsuit for more buoyancy.



3 The sea is beautiful, but hazardous

Swim in designated areas, check the weather and tides, and don't take risks.



4 Watch your physical condition

Know your limits and don't go in if you're not in good condition. No drinking alcohol. Accidents involving the middle-aged are increasing.



5 Don't go alone

When you go in the sea, never go alone. Take a break after an hour. Taking appropriate breaks and drinking enough water is also important.



Accidents happen

Learn from an expert or a snorkeling instructor. Be sure to carefully practice first, in shallow waters where you can stand.



If you lower your chin, the tip of the snorkel goes under and lets water in.



Blow out hard to clear the water from the snorkel.

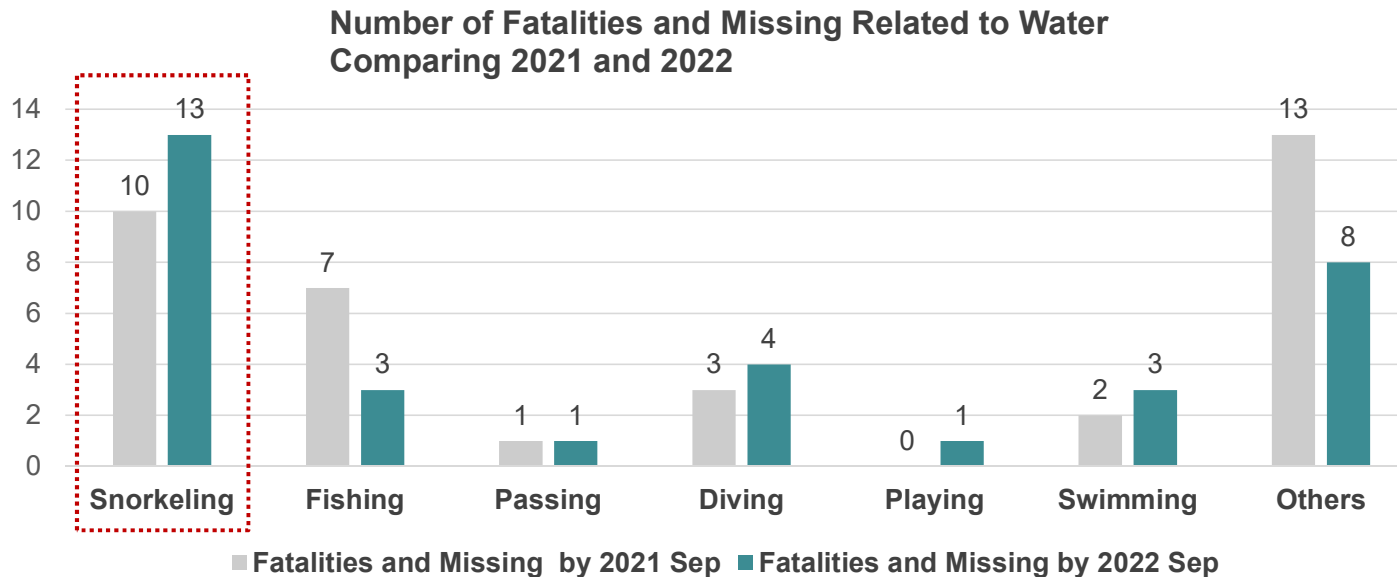


Keep your chin up so the tip of the snorkel stays above the water.

"Safety Guide for Visitors to Okinawa" Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau
https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf

3.2 Snorkeling: Accident Statistics (Okinawa)

There are many water-related accidents involving snorkelers - both local residents and tourists - due to accidental ingestion of seawater caused by improper use of snorkel gear, etc.



Okinawa Prefectural Police Okinawa Prefectural Police <https://www.police.pref.okinawa.jp/docs/2015022200039/>

3.3 Scuba Diving

Diving

5 safety points

1 Improve your dive skills

Learn the necessary **diving skills**, and always aim to **improve** them.

Can I swim well?



2 Take care of your health

If you have a **chronic illness**, take **advice from your doctor** first. Leave plenty of time after diving before **getting on a plane**.

Mind your health



3 Don't overdo it

If you aren't in the right physical or mental condition for diving on the day, have the **courage to pass it up**.

Get **plenty of sleep**, **don't drink heavily** the day before, and look after your physical condition.

Sleep well



4 Plan and discuss thoroughly

Check carefully

Besides checking dive time, depth, and gas pressure, thoroughly cover entry and exit methods, precautions at each point, hand signals, **emergency procedures** and so on. If there's anything you don't understand, **ask the dive staff**.



5 Inspecting your equipment keeps you safe

Using poorly maintained equipment is **very dangerous**.

Keep your equipment in perfect condition to enjoy safe diving.



"Safety Guide for Visitors to Okinawa" Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau
https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf

3.4 Surfing

- ◆ **Always surf within your limits**
- ◆ **Explore new areas with an experienced person who knows the location**
- ◆ **Assess water conditions for at least 10 minutes, with an eye out for specific hazards before paddling out**
- ◆ **Pay attention to other surfers to avoid collisions**
- ◆ **Never surf alone**

Surfing is a popular activity in Okinawa and local surfers will always show up to surf the best waves. If you see waves breaking in an area where there are no surfers, it might be a good sign that the area is too dangerous for surfing.

3.5 Freediving (Skin Diving)

Freediving is a form of diving which is conducted without the use of breathing equipment.

Comparing to scuba diving, freediving's risk is extremely high.



3.5 Freediving (Skin Diving)

Even in a depth of just a couple of meters underwater, pressure increases greatly and in such a harsh environment, lung barotrauma and hypoxic blackout (shallow water blackout) have occurred.

Accident Preventions – 4 Points

1. Do not dive alone. Always dive with a partner using the “One Up/One Down” Technique
2. Do not hyperventilate before diving – learn proper breathing techniques with a PADI or AIDA licensed instructor before attempting freediving
3. Bring a buoy for surface rest
4. Perform recovery breaths after every dive

3.6 Others

Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP)

Accidents have occurred due to insufficient information on weather and marine condition, as well as lack of skill and experience.

WIND is the number one hazard for paddlers (SUP, kayaks, canoes). A beginner paddler will not be able to control their craft in a strong wind. When winds are blowing offshore, paddling closer to shore and parallel to the coast is the safer choice. Exploring deeper waters should only be considered on the calmest days.

Accident Prevention – 6 Points

1. Check the weather, sea and wind condition.
2. Learn basic skills necessary for SUP before heading out to sea.
3. Do not go alone; go in a group.
4. Wear a life jacket.
5. Bring a survival mirror & safety whistle in case of drifting away.
6. Bring a smart phone for emergency communication.



Water Safety Guide

https://www6.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/watersafety/swimming/pdf/leaflet_swimming.pdf

3.6 Others

SUP accident in Okinawa

Date: October 13th, 2022

Location: Kohama Island, Taketomi Town

A woman was swept out to sea during a SUP tour in Kohama island and rescued after 14 hours. Advisories of high wave and storm/gale were issued during the tour.

- **Do not go out to the ocean while there are weather advisories or warnings.**
- **Even if you are going on a guided tour, you must have the courage to decline participation if you have any concerns about the activity, weather, or your health.**
- **Bring a smart phone with waterproof pouch for emergency.**
- **Bring a survival mirror & safety whistle in case of drifting away.**
- **Wear a life jacket.**

3.6 Others

Kitesurfing

Date: June 12th, 2006

Location: Nashiro beach, Itoman city

A man was blown off course by a strong wind while landing. He smashed into the seawall and hit his head. The man was confirmed dead at the hospital. The victim did not wear a helmet, so protection was not enough.

- **Kitesurfing is a dangerous sport. You should take formal training with a professional IKO certified instructor before beginning this high-risk activity.**
- **Carefully assess wind and water conditions before kitesurfing. Terminate activities immediately if conditions take a turn for the worse.**



3.6 Others

Jet Ski

Collision with other vessels or swimmers and fatalities have occurred due to dangerous behaviors.

Accident Prevention – 4 Points

1. Do not engage in negligent behaviors near swimmers, etc.
2. Do not engage in dangerous behaviors, such as shaking off passengers or swinging the towing-equipment.
3. Wear appropriate equipment.
4. Know restoration methods (what to do if flipped/capsized) and precautions.



Water Safety Guide

https://www6.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/watersafety/swimming/pdf/leaflet_swimming.pdf

3.6 Others

Small Boat

Accidents have occurred due to insufficient information on weather and sea condition, as well as lack of understanding a vessel's performance.



Accident Prevention – 5 Points

1. Pay attention to the balance of the boat and do not stand up on board.
2. Set sail when waves are low (wave height less than 20cm) or winds are light (wind speed less than 4m/s).
3. Consider performance and possible breakdowns and stay within range where you can return with the boat (within 1km from shore).
4. Wear a life jacket
5. **Bring a survival mirror in case you fall overboard and drift away.**

Water Safety Guide

https://www6.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/watersafety/swimming/pdf/leaflet_swimming.pdf

3.6 Others

Fishing

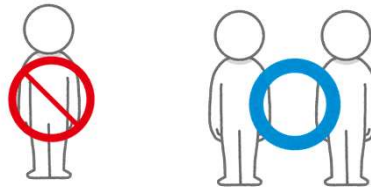
Falling into sea from wharfs and breakwaters.



Accident Prevention – 4 Points

1. Take into consideration the weather forecast and your physical condition. Never overdo it.
2. Inform others of your fishing plans and do not go alone.

3. Do not enter restricted areas.



4. Wear a life jacket.

3.6 Others

Canoe

Accidents have occurred due to insufficient information on weather and sea condition, as well as lack of skills and experience.

Proper precaution when canoeing also apply to kayakers and paddle boarders
Accident Prevention – 4 Points

1. Check the weather and sea condition.
2. Assess the winds and plan your route accordingly.
3. Learn basic skills necessary in the event of capsizing, such as sinking and rolling before heading out to sea.
4. Do not go alone. Go with several canoes.
5. Wear a life jacket.



3.6 Others

Life jacket, wetsuit, survival mirror & safety whistle

- When **swimming**, snorkeling, fishing, SUP, canoeing, or tide-pooling, be sure to **wear a life jacket or wetsuit to prevent sinking**. People who sink underwater are difficult to recover.
- **Personal Floatation Devices** like **life jackets** allow your body to float on the surface of the ocean, making it easier to breathe, and also helps preserve your strength in the event of a water-related accident. **In addition, bright colored life jackets stand out and are more likely to be detected during a rescue.**
- A survival mirror is a useful item while you are waiting for rescue. The reflector is used to reflect sunlight from a mirror to an aircraft or vessel to signal its position. The mirror has a hole in the middle for aiming, and by aiming the mirror at an aircraft or vessel, it can effectively reflect sunlight from the mirror. Put this item in your life jacket pocket just in case.



If all else fails and you find yourself stranded at sea, make it easy for rescuers to locate you by wearing brightly colored clothing & equipment. A black wetsuit in a dark blue sea is difficult to see. Being seen can save your life!!



4. SAFETY MEASURES/EMERGENCY

4.1 Safety Measures

■ Water Safety Tips

- Each person should wear a bright colored life jacket **with a survival mirror and safety whistle.**
- Avoid going alone. To ensure safety, engage in leisure activities with groups. That way there will be more potential help available and a higher opportunity of prompt response in the event of an emergency.
- Obtain information on the day's weather and sea condition.
Example: Windy com: <https://www.windy.com/>
- Carry a communication device such as a smart phone. **Make sure to GPS is on.**
- **Call 118 for marine emergencies. If your GPS is on, the coast guard can find your position more easily.**
Emergency call function:
https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_seisaku/ictseisaku/net_anzen/hijyo/tuho.html
- Let someone else know where you are going, what activities are planned, with whom and what time you expect to return. Make sure to contact to confirm you came back safely.
Say “If we do not return or contact you by the time of Δ h○m, call **118.**”
- It is strongly recommended to go where there is a controlled beach attended by lifeguards.



Windy.com
Windy.app is a professional weather app, created for water and wind sports

4.1 Safety Measures

■ Take necessary training from professional

- When using equipment, such as underwater mask, snorkel, fins, paddle boat, SUP, etc., **it is strongly recommended to take specific training. Unfamiliarity with using equipment may cause accidents.**
- **There are also ways to participate in guided marine leisure activities.**
- **Even if you are going to participate in a training or guided tour, you must have the courage to decline participation if you have any unresolved concerns about the activity, weather, or your health.**



“Safe leisure activities in the sea, rivers, etc.” Okinawa Prefectural Police
<https://www.police.pref.okinawa.jp/docs/2015022200039/>

4.1 Safety Measures

- People over 50 years old account for 60% of water-related fatalities in the prefecture, and the fatality rate of water-related accidents is also high in proportion to the age of the victims.
- To prevent incidents, make sure all people engaging in the activity are in good physical condition and promote the use of life jackets.
- Do not allow your children to swim alone. Accompany them all times and watch over them until they are out of the water.
- The majority of child drownings occur before or after the designated “swim time”. When kids are finished with water activities, don’t let your guard down.



“Safe leisure activities in the sea, rivers, etc.” Okinawa Prefectural Police
<https://www.police.pref.okinawa.jp/docs/2015022200039/>

4.1 Safety Measures

Meaning of flags

Emergency Evacuation Flag (U Flag) (Red and white flag)

This flag is used to notify people to evacuate from water areas to land in case of emergencies such as Tsunamis. The Japan Lifesaving Association recommends the U Flag, which conforms to the International Lifesaving Federation and is easy to understand.



Photo source : Japan Life Saving Association

No Swimming (Red Flag)

It is dangerous to swim, so please follow the instructions of the lifesavers and do not swim. If adults go in, small children will imitate them. Please be sure to follow the instructions.






4.1 Safety Measures

Meaning of flags

- Condition Flag

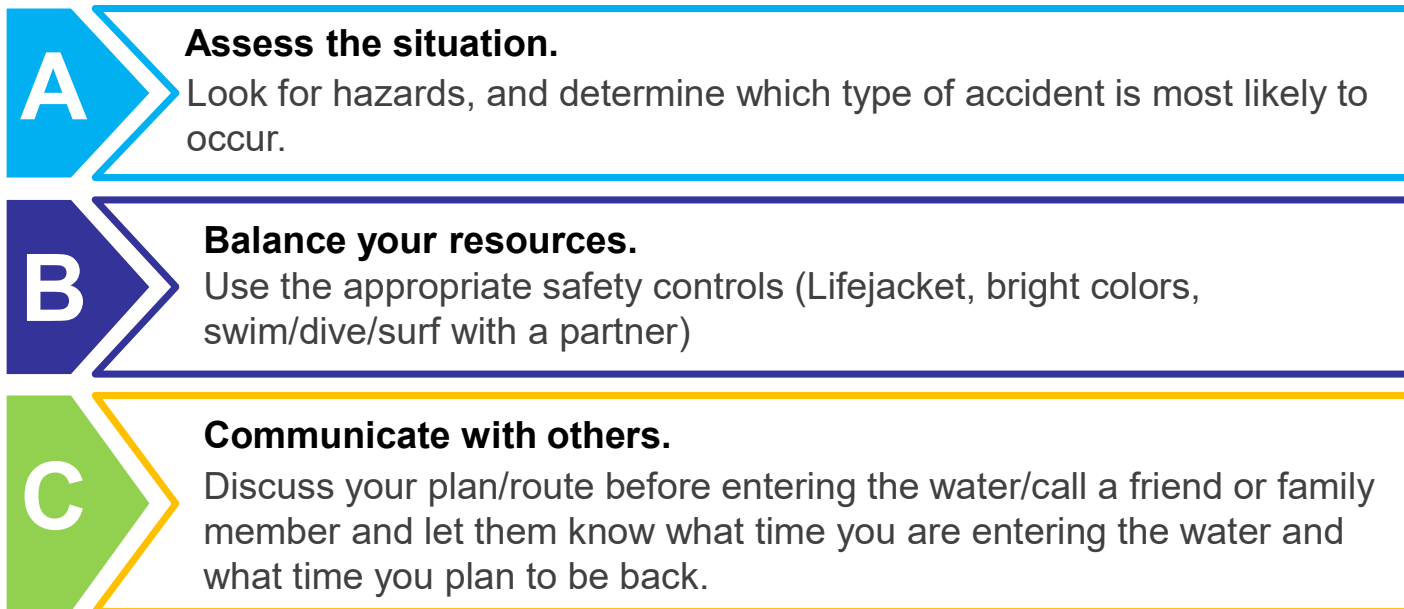


Blue	Yellow	Red
Sea condition is safe to swim. Stay within the designated area	Caution requires when swim	Sea condition is danger for swimming. Do not go in water
		

4.2 Risk Management: Make informed Decisions

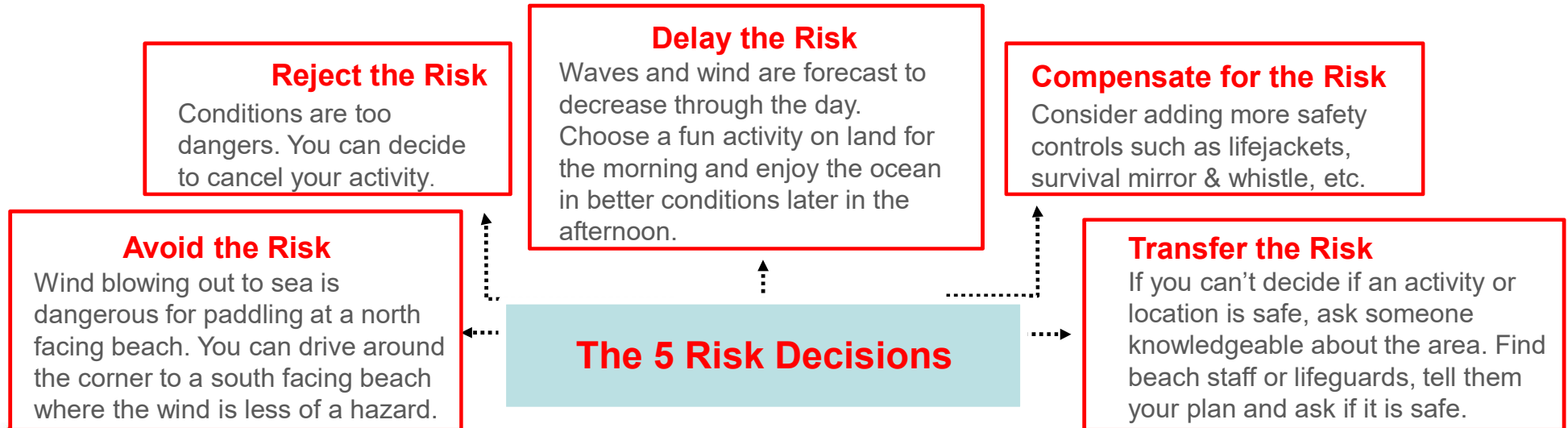
The far majority of accidents are caused by poor decision making. Risk Management is a simple process to help make good decisions when a risk is present.

ABC's of Risk Management



4.2 Risk Management: Make informed Decisions

- ◆ After assessing the hazards, ask yourself “do the benefits outweigh the costs?”
- ◆ Not all risks are equal. After assessing the most likely accident that might occur, consider what safety plan you’ll put in place to mitigate the risk.
- ◆ If it is acceptable, you can proceed with your plan or activity. If you cannot mitigate the risk in an acceptable way, you should be confident to cancel your ocean activities.



4.3 Emergency Response

Call **118** to report an accident or crime at sea to the Japan Coast Guard.

The operator will ask the following:

- **What happened**
- **Where (Know your location!)**
- **Your name**



Requests when making a "118" call
https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/01kanku/rumoi/oshirase/118ban/118_onagai.pdf

For more information on safety

Please check the following web sites:

- Naha Coast Guard Office <https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/11kanku/naha/>
- Japan Coast Guard <https://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/>
- Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau [Safety Guide for Visitors to Okinawa
\(https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf\)](https://www.okinawastory.jp/documents/pamphlet/SafetyGuide2019_en.pdf)
- JAPAN LIFESAVING ASSOCIATION <https://ls.jla-lifesaving.or.jp/>
- Japan Meteorological Agency [Guide to Wave Charts 2019
\(https://www.jma.go.jp/jma/kishou/books/wavechart/wavechart.pdf\)](https://www.jma.go.jp/jma/kishou/books/wavechart/wavechart.pdf)
- Rip Current Safety <https://www.ripcurrentsafety.com/>
- Military Sea Conditions Advisory information (Update 3 times daily) <https://www.kadena.af.mil/Agencies/Local-Weather/>

Appreciation

In preparing this document, we also referred to the website of the Japan Coast Guard and the Naha Coast Guard Office. We thank the Japan Coast Guard and the Naha Coast Guard office.



Thank you!