



Water Safety Policy

Applies to: **ALL SOFA PERSONNEL ON OKINAWA**

- Official Sea Conditions will be checked prior to participating in any water related activity
- Broken down between East and West sectors



➤ <https://shogunweather.com>

- Sea Condition All Clear (SC-AC): Conditions which are ideal for water related activities.
- Sea Condition Caution (SC-C): Hazardous conditions may exist. Exercise caution when entering the water.
- Sea Condition Danger (SC-D): Life threatening conditions exist. Water entry is prohibited for all activities. *Note: Personnel may still enter the water in designated/lifeguarded swimming areas.



Water Safety Policy

- Surfers/body boarders will attach a leash from the user to the board
- Personal water craft operators and occupants will wear a personal floatation device (PFD; i.e. life vest) at all times.
- Scuba divers will be certified and wear appropriate scuba gear



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Water Safety Policy

- Snorkelers will wear a PFD (i.e. snorkeling vest) and use the buddy system when entering the water at locations not supervised by lifeguards
- Cliff/ bridge jumping or diving is PROHIBITED



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Scuba Diving Safety

- Dive only if you are certified
- Dive within your certification
- Observe posted weather conditions and learn to evaluate the water yourself
 - If the weather or water looks threatening don't dive, even if there are no sea conditions posted
- Always dive with a certified dive partner
- Avoid hazardous areas
- Remember, cave diving is prohibited on Okinawa
- Plan your dive, Dive your plan



SCUBA Diving

- **Must be certified!! Never rent gear or attempt to teach someone to dive unless you are a certified and insured instructor**
- **Know your limitations, abilities and qualifications. Don't exceed your training!**
- **Have all of the proper gear**
- **Obtain a site orientation prior to diving the site for the first time**
- **Never Dive alone**
- **Plan an alternate site or activity as a back-up**



Snorkeling

- A great sport with little overhead cost
- Can be enjoyed by relatively young children, given a safe environment
- Training is available on island
- Wear the proper gear
- Be aware of the water conditions and your abilities before entering the water
- When the surfers are in the water...that's not a good sign for snorkeling



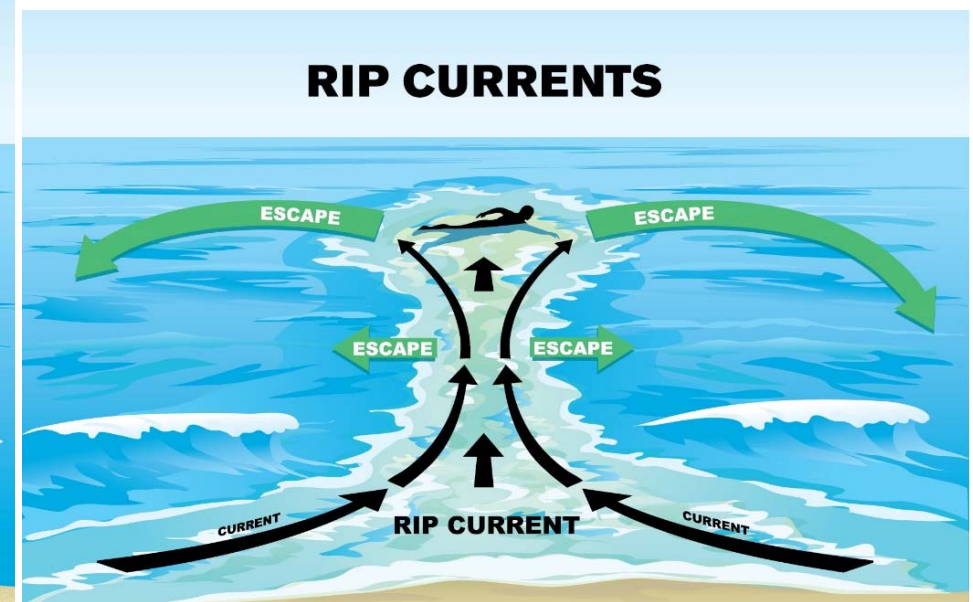
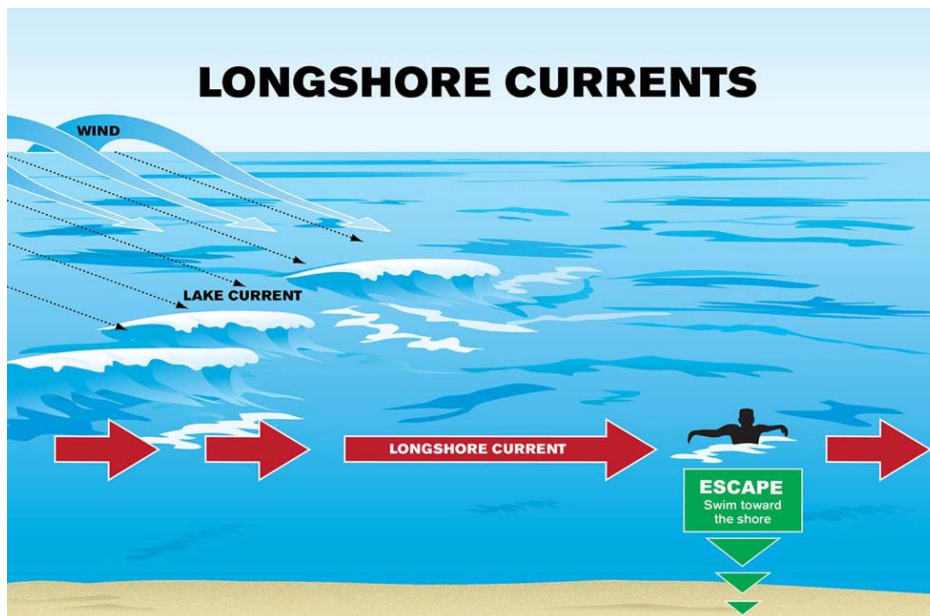
Surfing

- **Rule of thumb: The places safe to surf usually don't have the better waves**
- **Never surf alone**
- **Usually 2 hours either side of high tide is safest**
- **Sea conditions change rapidly and warnings are there for your protection**



Currents

- Rip currents – Can move faster than Olympic swimmer
 - Swim across the current, then back to shore
- Longshore current – swim with, not against, the current and swim diagonal until you reach the shore





Rip Currents

- A line of turbid, foamy water moving away from shore
- Usually narrow and disperse quickly in deeper water
- If caught in one, swim parallel to the shore if possible or wave and shout for help



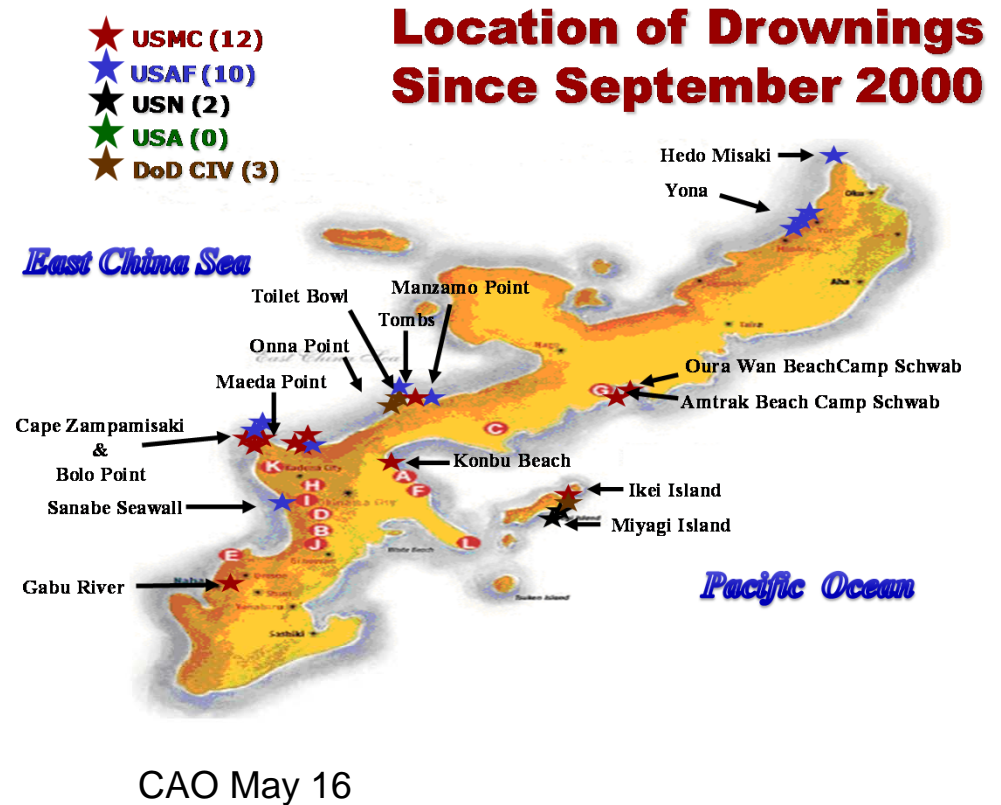
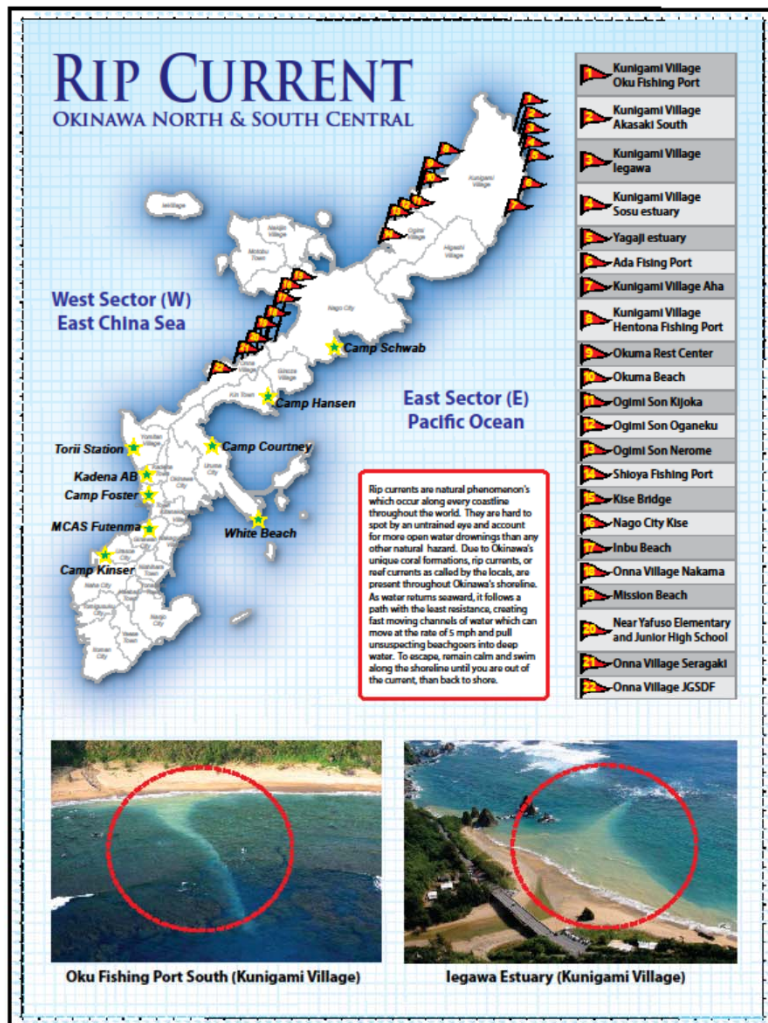


Rip Tides

- Many beaches on Okinawa have rip tides
- Swim only on beaches that have lifeguards on duty
- If caught in rip tide swim parallel to the shore or current rather than against the rip tide
- Wave and call for help as soon as you realize you are being pulled out to sea
- Conserve your energy



Hazardous Locations





Hazardous Areas Around Okinawa

■ **Bolo Point:**

- Most dangerous area for water related activities
- More water related deaths than all other areas on Okinawa put together.
- Even hazardous for sight seeing during rough weather
- Several personnel have been swept away or injured when sight seeing in this area during typhoon conditions
- High cliffs from which personnel can be swept during storm condition
- Strong currents
- High waves

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Hazardous Areas Around Okinawa

Hedo Point : Northern part of island. Same type area as Bolo Point

Suicide Cliffs: Southern part of island. Same type area as Bolo Point and Hedo Point

Meada Point: Not far from Bolo Point. Cliffs make entry into water difficult. Long stairs leads to water. Must be in good shape to negotiate with diving equipment.

Ona Point: Divers have been trapped in caves in this area. Cave diving is prohibited on Okinawa

Pacific Side of Island: The east side of the island is generally more hazardous than the west side. Stronger currents, higher waves and often rip tides.



Risk Management



☐ **G**ear
☐ **P**lan
☐ **S**kills

*Serviceable
equipment?
Appropriate gear?*

*Weather, planned route,
contingencies? Does
anyone know where you'll
be?*

*Are you trained on equipment?
Are you certified for activity?
Does experience match
conditions?*

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Risk Management



SCUBA DIVING



Do you have all required items? Is your gear serviceable? Have you conducted a pre-dive inspection?


How many dives are planned? What will be the max depth? What are the weather and sea conditions?

Are you well trained for the planned dive? Is someone in the group familiar with the location?

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Risk Management



SNORKELING



Check Three
Gear • Plan • Skills

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gear	Do you have serviceable mask, snorkel, fins, floatation device, and cell phone?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan	What are the weather and sea conditions? How will you contact emergency services if required? Do you have a buddy? Are you staying close to shore?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skills	Are you trained on how to deal with rip currents? Are you well rested? Do you know the area?

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Links to Water Safety Video

■ SharePoint:

- https://kadena.eis.pacaf.af.mil/18WG/WSA/SE/SEG/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/Safety%20Programs/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2F18WG%2FWSA%2FSE%2FSEG%2FSafety%20Programs%2FSports%20Safety&FolderCTID=0x01200056D9A82B26B2FB4AB0A65CD6EAE2E573&View=%7BD62B61E0%2D3262%2D4126%2D80B3%2D2B71495E8AB8%7D

■ Youtube:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJUAiqBSn1g>