



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK TO HAVE LIFEGUARDED BEACHES EVERY WEEKEND THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30

VISITORS URGED TO USE CAUTION AND SWIM ONLY AT LIFEGUARDED BEACHES

(16/P83) TRENTON – Although Labor Day has passed, Island Beach State Park will continue to keep one of its swimming areas open and staffed with lifeguards on a limited schedule for the enjoyment of visitors until the end of this month.

Island Beach State Park lifeguards will be on duty at Ocean Bathing Area 1 beaches from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 9 through Monday, Sept. 12; Friday, Sept. 16 through Monday, Sept. 19; Friday, Sept. 23 through Monday, Sept. 26; and Friday, Sept. 30.

At the same time, the Department of Environmental Protection and National Weather Service urge the public to exercise caution and swim only at lifeguarded beaches. Many municipally operated beaches have now reduced lifeguard operations following Labor Day weekend.

“Our lifeguards do a great job every year protecting the hundreds of thousands of swimmers and waders who enjoy the waters at the Jersey Shore,” said State Parks and Forestry Director Mark Texel. “We continue this service after Labor Day weekend because many local people enjoy the reduced crowds and fine weather during September at our beaches. As a result, we will have our swimming areas protected on the weekends.”

Rip currents are the leading cause of drownings in the ocean across the nation. Beach visitors are encouraged to pack appropriate safety gear and remember these safety tips:

- Most beaches are posted with warning signs regarding rip currents. Read them and heed their advice.
- Rip currents do not pull people under the water – they pull people away from shore. Drowning deaths occur when people pulled offshore are unable to keep themselves afloat and swim to shore. This may be due to any combination of fear, panic, exhaustion or lack of swimming skills.
- If you are caught in a rip current, stay calm and swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward shore. If you can't make it to the shore, draw attention to yourself by waving and calling for help.

- If you see someone in trouble in a rip current, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1. Rip currents can be stronger than the strongest swimmer. Throw the victim something that floats, such as a lifejacket, raft, cooler or inflatable ball and stay on shore and in contact with that person until help arrives. Do not become a victim of the rip current yourself.

For more information on Island Beach State Park, including any park advisories that may be posted, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html

For more information on rip currents from the National Weather Service, visit: <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/>

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