

The safety and enjoyment of Florida's public beaches are affected by changes in tide and surf conditions. To minimize the risks of drowning or serious injury, the Florida Coastal Management Program worked with the Florida Beach Patrol Chiefs Association, the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA), and the International Life Saving Federation to develop a uniform warning flag program for use by Florida's beachfront communities.

Why does Florida need a uniform warning flag system?

Many residents and visitors travel to different parts of the state to enjoy Florida's wonderful public beaches, and many beach communities post warning flags. Differences in flag colors, sizes and symbols from place-to-place can confuse beach goers, thereby decreasing the effectiveness of efforts to improve public safety. The Florida Legislature decided that a uniform flag system would provide the best measure of safety and, in 2005, amended Section 380.276, F.S., to require that all public beaches displaying warning flags use only the flags developed for the state's warning program.

How does it work?

Florida's beach warning flag program uses flags in four colors accompanied by interpretive signs along the beach to explain the meaning of each color. To the extent funds are available, warning flags and interpretive signs are provided free of charge to local governments that provide public beach access. The communities that receive the free warning flags and interpretive signs are responsible for the installation, proper use, and maintenance of the flags and signs.

Are flags used to warn of the presence of rip currents?

The beach flags provide general warnings about overall surf conditions and do not specifically advise the public of the presence of rip currents. However increasing awareness of natural conditions which pose a significant risk at the beach, such as rip currents, is a critical element to improve public safety. Therefore in addition to this warning system, the FCMP also distributes rip current educational signs to local governments and public parks in the state of Florida free of charge. Since 2004 FCMP has distributed these comprehensive national signs that were developed through the combined efforts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service (NWS) and SeaGrant, and the USLA. To further your understanding on the dynamics and dangers of rip currents, FCMP encourages you to consult the professional advice provided by the [NWS](#) and the [USLA](#).

BEACH WARNING FLAGS
BANDERAS DE ADVERTENCIA EN LA PLAYA

-  **Water Closed to Public**
Agua Cerrada al Publico
-  **High Hazard**
High Surf and/or Strong Currents
Peligro Alto, Resaca Alta y/o Corrientes Fuertes
-  **Medium Hazard**
Moderate Surf and/or Currents
Peligro Medio, Resaca Moderada y/o Corrientes Fuertes
-  **Low Hazard**
Calm Conditions, Exercise Caution
Peligro Bajo, Condiciones Calmas, Tenga Cuidado
-  **Stinging Marine Life**
Man o' War, Jellyfish, Stingrays
Animal Marino que causa picaduras Fragata Portuguesa, Medusas, Rayas

Absence of Flags Does Not Assure Safe Waters
La Ausencia de Banderas No Asegura Aguas Seguras

