Beach and water safety

Be safe in the surf

City of Gold Coast is proud to run Australia’s largest professional lifeguard service, protecting our beach users and promoting surf safety throughout the year across the city.

The decisions you make will help you to stay safe in the surf:

- Never swim alone or surf at beaches not patrolled by lifeguards or lifesavers.
- Never swim outside the red and yellow flags that mark safe swimming areas.
- Never swim directly after a meal or under the influence of alcohol.
- Never swim when the beach is closed, marked with ‘Danger - Reserve closed to bathing’ sign and a red flag.
- Never swim when there are no safety flags.
- Never panic if caught in a current or undertow but raise one arm straight up and float until help arrives.
- Never struggle if you get a cramp but raise one arm for help, float and keep the affected part of the body still.
- Never go out far when a yellow flag is flying - it means the surf is dangerous.
- Never swim if you’re unsure of safe conditions and seek advice from the nearest lifeguard.
- Never struggle against a rip or current but swim diagonally across it.

For more about our Lifeguard Service, see our Gold Coast lifeguards pages, or call us on 07 5581 6172.

Download and view our beach patrol information sheet.

To safely enjoy your beach experience, please download our Beach safety and information poster which includes translations into Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Japanese for our international visitors.

For the safety of swimmers, the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has also implemented a shark control program along our Gold Coast beaches.

Flags and signage

The golden rule for swimmers is:

- Always swim between the red and yellow flag on patrolled beaches.
- Always read the flags and safety signs and understand what they mean before entering the water.

---

Red and yellow flag (Safety)

Swim between the red and yellow flags.

---

Red flags (Danger)

Dangerous conditions.
Do not enter the water.
Surfboard riding only

Yellow flags (Caution)
Swim with caution.

Swimming prohibited

Related information
- Bathing reserves
- Beach cameras
- Beach surveillance towers
- Beach update
- Gold Coast lifeguards
- Lakes and canals
- Shark control program

Jump to key information

Key Information

Brochures, fact sheets & reports
- Beach safety and information poster
- Beach patrol information sheet
- Protecting yourself from dangerous aquatic organisms

External links
- Tow-In Surfing Code of Conduct

Maps, drawings & plans
- Bathing reserves for ocean beach foreshores
- Lifeguard surveillance towers and addresses

Forms & applications

Proposed school visit to Gold Coast beaches
Use this form to advise the City of Gold Coast of a proposed school excursion to Gold Coast beaches.

Downloads: Proposed visit to gold coast beaches (0.16MB) - Proposed visit to gold coast beaches (0.07MB)