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Enjoy the Beaches

- in Safety

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Extension Circular 721

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Cooperative Extension Service
Oregon State University • Corvallis



Welcome to the beautiful Oregon coast! We hope your visit will be one to remember joyfully—and we're sure it will be *if you treat the ocean with respect*.

Beach combing, picnics, hiking and taking pictures will all be happy memories of your holiday if you and your family heed the special safety rules for the coast areas.

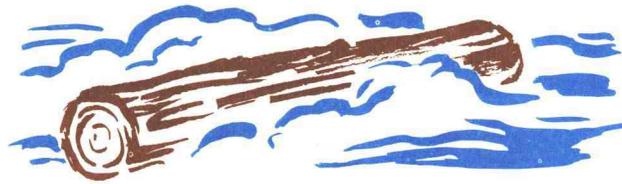
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Inviting though it looks, the beach is not a good highway. Driving on the sand can do much damage to your car, and if you aren't careful you could lose it entirely. If you *must* drive on the beach, remember that speed limit is 25 miles per hour. Careful driving on the beach is just as important in saving lives as it is on the highway. Keep your car out of soft sand, and be cautious of crossing streams. Never park your car and leave it unattended, or you may find it under several feet of water on your return.

Check the tide table before going on the beach, rocks, or in the water. Tide books may be obtained at motels, sports shops or sporting-goods stores. Coastal fishing and shellfish regulations are included in most tide books.

Firearms are prohibited on Oregon beaches. The law also regulates gathering starfish and other marine life in some areas. Ask local authorities about restrictions and don't "collect" yourself into trouble.

Here are a few marine cautions you will want the family to understand.



Tides

Every 24 hours and 51 minutes the tide rises and falls twice. The outgoing tide is the most dangerous for swimming because it can pull almost anything, including huge logs, in its path. Incoming tides are most dangerous to unwary fishermen and explorers. If you are boating, you should check not only the tides, but weather, condition of waves, fog, and so on. The Coast Guard can supply this information.



High Waves

Be alert at all times for extra high waves. They come unexpectedly and are especially dangerous to children and fishermen on low rocks and jetties. Occasional shock waves build up and come much higher than others. Never play around logs and driftwood that can be rolled or tossed by unexpected waves. Many people have been killed or crippled for life under the crush of rolling logs in the surf.

Undertows and Riptides

Strong downward and outward currents of water rushing out to sea create such a force at certain spots along the beach that a person can be swept off his feet and carried outward. Tides flowing in or out of bays and around the jetties also cause very strong currents. If you *do* get caught, don't panic. Get in a horizontal position and stay afloat. Don't waste energy fighting against the strong current. Drift on down the beach and try to swim in to shore at a different spot. Better yet, don't get caught.



Hiking and Climbing

Stay behind retaining walls and be sure the children do too. Cliff climbing is strictly for the birds. Cliff trails are *slippery* in wet weather! Shallow-rooted shrubs on coastal cliffs cannot be trusted for climbing support, and may cause the downfall of a thrill seeker. The thrill is gone when an adventurer falls to the rocks below.

Offshore rocks and jetties are a temptation to fishermen, nature-explorers, and children. Often exposed during low tides, these may be under violent waves as the tide returns. Many lives have been lost when unwary persons let themselves be trapped offshore by incoming waves and tides.

Logs and driftwood piles often contain nails, broken glass, and other snags. Treat them with respect.

The Coast is fun! Exploring the beaches, bays, rocks, tide pools, dunes, and driftwood is delightful and educational. But enjoy them in safety! Set a good example to children by observing sensible precautions yourself.



Sand Dunes

Playing on the sand dunes is lots of fun but exploring them alone is not for the inexperienced or for children.



Beach Law

If you cook on the beach, check local regulations. Use fire pits that will not allow the wind to scatter and spread the fire. Douse unattended fires.

Building a fire in driftwood areas is prohibited. Coastal breezes could easily fan a fire into an uncontrollable state. Sand dune stabilization with special beach grasses and shrub plantings has been done along parts of the coast. Unattended fires can spread to this cover and destroy years of costly work as well as damage property.



Bay Areas

Bays offer many recreational activities and abound in fish and shellfish. Slippery rocks and soft mud can be a hazard in some areas.

In Case of Emergency, Contact:

OREGON STATE POLICE

U. S. COAST GUARD

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

CIVIL AIR PATROL

Dial O. The operator will help.

Beach Safety Pointers

- Never turn your back on the surf.
- If you play in the surf, pick the right place and time.
- Use only safe, marked trails to the beach.
- Don't let children explore the beach, surf, rocks, or sand dunes alone.
- Build fires only in approved places. Put them out with sand or water when you leave.
- Use the buddy system when swimming or exploring.
- Check regulations, tides, and weather conditions before driving, hiking, swimming, and boating.

Enjoy Oregon's beautiful beaches in safety.

This circular was prepared by specialists and coast county Extension agents and published by the Cooperative Extension Service of Oregon State University.

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