



# Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

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**Subject:** Sneaker Waves

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, and the National Weather Service would like to remind the public as winter approaches to be mindful of the hidden dangers on area beaches and jetties. Large storms generate large surf during the winter months in the North Pacific. These storms generate what is commonly called "Sneaker Waves". Sneaker Waves are exceptionally large waves that occur without warning after ten to fifteen minutes of smaller waves. Many times the smaller waves with deceive the public into a false sense of security as they recreate near the beach. Rocks and jetties can give an additional false sense of security. These large waves then appear as if out of nowhere and wash the unsuspecting individual into the surf, many times costing them their lives.

Every year people drown on the North Coast as a result of these sneaker waves. If you are visiting local beach areas or the jetties, never turn your back on the Ocean. Stay away from the immediate wave slope and off of the rocks and jetties. If you are hunting agates or other items on area beaches always watch the surf. Many times unsuspecting victims are too busy looking down and not paying attention. Do not allow children to play near the surf line, always watch the surf. If your dog gets washed into the ocean do not chase after it. Many times the owner drowns trying to save their dog, while the dog later makes it out alive.

Try to have a cell phone if visiting area beaches. If someone does get washed into the surf call 911 immediately. Survivability in north coast waters is low due to hypothermia and rough surf.

Mike Downey, Sheriff