

Urgent – Marine Weather Message

High Surf Warning

Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Services

12:15 pm Saturday 10 February 2024

...High surf warning in effect Barbuda, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands...

...High surf warning goes into effect tonight for Antigua...

Locations to be affected: Reefs and mainly exposed northern and north-facing coastlines with relatively shallow, gentle to moderately sloping, nearshore areas.

Timing: Until Monday for Barbuda, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, and tonight until Monday for Antigua.

Synopsis: Moderate long-period swells are reaching the area and causing very hazardous conditions mainly along northern and north-facing coastlines. The threat level to the life, livelihood, property and infrastructure of those using the affected coastlines is high, with the potential for extensive impacts. These swells are expected to cause life-threatening surfs and rip currents for affected coastlines. A high surf warning means that dangerous battering surfs of over 3 metres or over 10 feet will affect some coastlines in the warning area, producing very hazardous conditions.

Seas (significant wave heights): 2.1 to 3.0 metres (6 to 10 feet), occasionally or locally reaching near 4.5 metres (15 feet). Swell period: 9 to 12 seconds. **Swells:** Northerly at 1.8 to 2.7 metres (6 to 9 feet) and occasionally higher.

Surfs (breaking swells): Over 3 metres (over 10 feet). These conditions will be very conducive to dangerous rip currents. Please note that surfs could be as much as twice the height of swells, depending on the bathymetry of the nearshore areas.

Coastal flooding: High tides combined with onshore wind and swell actions will result in coastal flooding and beach erosion.

Potential Impacts: Loss of life—strong currents that can carry even the strongest swimmers out to sea; injuries to beachgoers; beach erosion; sea water splashing onto low-lying coastal roads; beach closures; disruptions to marine recreation and businesses; financial losses; damage to coral reefs; salt-water intrusion and disruptions to potable water from desalination. High surfs can knock spectators off exposed rocks and jetties. Breaking waves may occasionally impact harbours making navigating the harbour channel dangerous.

Precautionary actions: No one should enter the waters of the main warning areas. All are also urged to stay away from rocky and or coastal structures along affected coastlines.

Rip currents are powerful channels of water flowing quickly away from shore, which occur most often at low spots or breaks in the sandbar and near structures such as groins, jetties and piers. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Please continue to monitor these hazardous, life-threatening marine conditions. Stay tuned to updates coming out of the Meteorological Office through antiguamet.com, twitter.com/abmetservice, facebook.com/abmetservice and youtube.com/@abmetservice. Also, stay tuned to ABS Radio and TV along with other media platforms for updates.

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