Staying Safe Along the Shore

The coastline can be exciting and dynamic. Always reduce risk to yourself and others when capturing King Tides imagery. There are many potential hazards along the coast and while signs may warn of dangers it is important to be aware of and follow a few set guidelines to reduce risk to yourself and others.

It is always best to visit the site ahead of time to identify potential safety considerations along that particular shoreline. Identify safe parking and walking access routes.

1. Always monitor the wind, waves, tides and weather, adjusting plans accordingly
   a. Tide tables provide predictions of tidal heights and times of low and high tide each day. Weather and seasonal conditions affect those heights.

2. Dress for outside conditions. Dress in layers to stay warm. The coast is often cooler than inland. Wear a hat/sunscreen for skin protection.
   a. Know you may get wet.
   b. Wear closed toed, nonslip shoes to protect your toes and reduce the risk of slipping.

3. Communication is critical – let someone know when and where you are going to photograph and when you will be returning, whether you are on your own or with a friend. Bring a cell phone to stay in touch.

   If you are leading a group you will also want to
   a. establish a communication plan to keep in touch with the other leaders and chaperones.
   b. establish a buddy system and understood boundaries for exploring.
   c. establish a place to meet back if someone gets lost

In the field
4. Rocks and other wet surfaces can be slippery and covered with algae. Move slowly and stay away from the water’s edge.

5. Large wave surges, or sneaker waves are unpredictable and can knock a person off their feet without warning. When you see an increase in wave height move to a safer area away from the water’s edge.

6. Be aware logs and driftwood can be easily moved with only few inches of water.

7. Rip currents can pull people out to sea quickly. If you end up in the water swim parallel to the shoreline until you are out of the current and then swim back to shore.

8. Ahead of time identify where you can get emergency help if needed. Bring a first aid kit with you into the field.

9. Avoid climbing up cliffs as shoreline cliffs can often be unstable and collapse under you. Stay on the trail to reduce erosion and to prevent from running into hazards such as poison ivy or ticks.