Rip Current Safety Fatality File



Man dies swimming in ocean while on vacation; family says rip currents to blame.

OAK ISLAND, N.C. (WECT/Gray News) – A family is trying to recover after losing a loved one while vacationing in North Carolina over Memorial Day weekend.

WECT reports Jacob Martin, 36, was visiting Oak Island with his family when suddenly their weekend trip took a tragic turn.

Oak Island Water Rescue reports rescuers got a call on May 28 about a man struggling in the water. When crews arrived at the scene, rescuers said nurses, who happened to be on the beach, had already started CPR on Martin, and a witness had pulled him out of the water.

However, even with the help of the good Samaritans, Martin did not survive.

Martin□s mother, Katrina Thornburg, said she spent weeks planning the family trip, and Martin drove from West Virginia with his kids to take part in it.

□We got here Friday night, and I took videos. The family was cooking and singing,□ she said. □I□m still in shock; I don□t know how to process it.□

Yellow flags were flying at the beach at Oak Island on Saturday due to the moderate risk for rip currents, and Martin□s mother said she believes that□s what took his life.

□He could swim, and no one even really thought about it,□ she said. □So, it is very dangerous, and it is a real threat. You need to take it seriously.□

Ocean Rescue Chief Pete Grendze couldn□t confirm if a rip current caused Martin□s death but said an autopsy had been scheduled.