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# On Guard

A holiday, a hot  
weekend and a  
heads-up to swimmers:  
Stick close to lifeguards

**A4-5**



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# on at area beaches



Lifeguards Chris Johnson, left, and Jeffrey Shillingford watch over Field 6 at Jones Beach.

- Officials caution beachgoers in wake of drownings
- Full staffing of 450-plus lifeguards is expected

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The early season's spate of three beach drownings off Long Island has parks officials and lifeguards warning beachgoers over this July Fourth holiday weekend to swim only in guarded waters.

With temperatures forecast in the 90s during the highest beach attendance weekend of the year, state parks officials said they expect more than 350,000 people to hit Jones Beach and 100,000 at Robert Moses State Park. A full complement of 457 lifeguards will be working the state beaches, they said.

State parks regional director Ronald Foley said lifeguards will be patrolling unguarded areas because "we're all aware of what happened this spring at unguarded beaches," referring to drownings at Long Beach, Jones Beach and the Rockaways.

"People need to find out where the lifeguards are and that's where you want to swim," he said. "They are there to help you, not to spoil your fun."

Tom Donovan, president of the Jones Beach Lifeguard Corps, the union for all Long Island state park lifeguards, said lifeguards will patrol constantly in areas where swimming is prohibited to keep people out of the water. "There is a tendency for people to go to the beach near where they park even if there are no lifeguards there, and some people don't like to be in crowds so they go to an empty beach," he said. "We are always vigilant in that area."

If residents are unsure about their swimming ability in the ocean, Foley said, they should alert the lifeguards, who will keep an eye on them.

Unlike the state parks, there are no areas of the beach in Long Beach without lifeguard protection.

The city's chief of lifeguards, Paul Gillespie, said a full complement of 130 lifeguards has been watching the beach daily since

## BEACH SAFETY

- Be careful. Currents and tides vary and can be dangerous.
- Always swim with a buddy and in guarded areas.
- Never swim at night.
- Stay hydrated.
- Regularly apply sunscreen.
- The water is rougher and less predictable at ocean beaches than at those on the Long Island Sound and bays.



Lifeguard Ricky Davis takes in Jones Beach's Field 6.

June 26 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. "They are all trained," he said. "We try to re-evaluate everything we do every season."

Still, George Gorman Jr., deputy regional director for the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said the coming days are "by far our biggest weekend."

The forecast calls for sunny skies all three days of the holiday weekend and through at least Thursday, according to the National Weather Service. Temperatures on Sunday and Monday are expected to be in the low- to mid-90s in some areas. Ocean breezes along the South Shore may keep high temperatures a few degrees lower.

In June, Nicole Surriel, 12, drowned off Long Beach while on a field trip with her Harlem school. In May, a 19-year-old Baruch College student drowned off Long Beach and a Queens Village man drowned at Jones Beach.