



MEMORANDUM

TO: Hon. Mayor and Board of Commissioners

THROUGH: Mike Helfrich, City Manager

FROM: John Mortellite, Deputy Fire Chief

DATE: May 13, 2026

RE: Approval of Florida Department of Children and Families Grant for Rip Tide Simulator

Background

Madeira Beach's Gulf-front beaches and John's Pass area generate frequent water-related emergencies, including distressed swimmers and near-drownings associated with strong currents and changing surf conditions. Enhancing both responder preparedness and public awareness is critical to improving safety outcomes.

Approval is requested to expend \$12,750 for the purchase of a Rip Tide (Rip Current) Simulator, related training aids, and public education handouts for the Madeira Beach Fire Department. This expense is fully reimbursable through an existing grant awarded and encumbered by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

The requested simulator and materials will support both operational training and community outreach efforts by:

1. Improving personnel training to better recognize rip currents, assess surf conditions, and implement safer, more effective rescue strategies.
2. Enhancing public education through demonstrations at community events, schools, and beach programs, clearly illustrating how rip currents form and how individuals can safely escape them.

Fiscal Impact

The total cost of \$12,750 will be initially funded by the City. However, this expense is fully reimbursable through an existing grant awarded and encumbered by the Florida Department of Children and Families. As a result, there will be no net cost to the City.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the expenditure for the Rip Current Simulator, training aids, and public education materials, as it provides significant public safety benefits with no long-term financial impact to the City.

Attachment(s): Rip current information sheet

