



Water Safety Summer Promotions Kit 2001

Welcome to the Red Cross Summer Promotions Kit! This kit is designed to help you make the most of your water promotions this summer – whether you host public events, put your facility in the spotlight through media relations, or both!

Inside, you'll find ideas for events, planning tips, concrete help in making the most of the media ... and more.

Purpose of this kit

1. To assist all interested Red Cross Water Safety partners – Authorized Providers, organizations and volunteers to organize Water Safety promotions and events.
2. To encourage community participation and partnerships with the common aim of distributing important water safety messages.
3. To provide helpful resource information, promotional and activity suggestions for Water Safety Summer Promotions.

Who should read this kit?

- Red Cross Water Safety Authorized Providers
- Red Cross Water Safety volunteers
- Community organization members
- Anyone interested in a water-safe community!

For additional resources, check out these websites:

- ◆ redcross.ca – official Canadian Red Cross site, with links to partners and information on water safety, drowning research and boating safety
- ◆ boatsmartcanada.ca – Red Cross site with fact sheets on boating safety
- ◆ boatsafetycampaign.com – A US site with resources for boating safety campaigns
- ◆ ccg-gcc.gc.ca – Canadian Coast Guard

Event checklist

Steps	Activity
Step 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Select your event (What will bring people out? What will attract the media?). <input type="checkbox"/> Set your event date and location; confirm these details. <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit the organizing committee. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan your media strategy.
Step 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the committee to outline details. Assign roles and responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Book the Buckles mascot costume, if he is part of your event. <input type="checkbox"/> Book AV equipment, displays, other rental items as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute promotional posters, brochures, if applicable.
Step 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Write news release and distribute media materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit local sponsors and/or celebrities. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete full site inspection; map out location of displays, activities.
Step 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Host training meeting for volunteers to review on-site activities.
Step 5	<input type="checkbox"/> The Big Event! <input type="checkbox"/> Make follow-up phone calls with your local media to ensure their participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure committee members are briefed and ready to go.
Step 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the committee for event wrap up. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete your evaluation – did you achieve your goals? <input type="checkbox"/> Generate list of organizations/individuals who require recognition.
Step 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Send out thank you notes.

Ideas for your water safety event

Tip: Buckles the Red Cross Water Safety Mascot can help promote your event! Contact your local Red Cross for scheduling information.

PFD fashion show

Host an “Open House” at your facility. Set up displays and activities. Host a PFD fashion show once or twice during the event. Work with a local retailer to model the latest PFD designs and colours, for all ages and all activities. Don’t forget the PFDs now available for the family dog!



Photos with Buckles

Set up a display with Water Safety information. Include an opportunity for children to have their picture taken with Buckles, your own facility mascot, or a local celebrity. Pictures can be taken with a Polaroid camera, and a nominal fee charged to cover the film costs.

School visits

Call your local school board office or school principal and ask if Buckles can drop by for a visit or attend a school event.

Colouring contest

Host a coloring contest in your community. Speak with the local business community to act as drop off points for the completed entries. Ask the newspaper to print the coloring sheet in their children's section. Try to get one or two PFDs donated as prizes.

Design your own PFD

This activity can be operated as part of your activity day, or as a different type of coloring contest. Provide coloring sheets with an outline of a PFD (or for your activity day, use big rolls of kraft paper). Have children colour their own designs on the PFDs. Post them up in the facility and draw a prize. (This may appeal more to older children). Note: Multi-colored PFDs are now Canadian government approved.

Trade show

Check with your local community calendar to find out when there may be trade shows or mall displays on home improvements (like swimming pools!), gardening, or boating. Find out if you can set up a Water Safety display. Provide activity sheets, brochures, stickers and tattoos.

On the road

Arrange to set up a display at your local backyard pool dealer/supplier. Hand out Water Safety materials; provide information on backyard pool safety.

Safety fair

Organize a Safety Fair at your facility. Contact local organizations interested in and involved with injury prevention and safety promotion, and ask them to set up displays. Participants could include police, fire department, community health groups, sporting organizations, etc.

Marinas, boat launches, sporting shows

There is no better place to spread the word about Water Safety than at the local marina, boat launch or boat show. Contact your local marina for dates and times.

Fun runs & walkathons

May and June are the season for various fun runs and family walkathons. Most running shoe/sportswear stores have a list of local events and contact persons. (Buckles is sure to be a big hit joining in the fun!)

Retail/mall display

Check with your local mall about setting up a display about Water Safety. Teach shoppers how to choose and fit the best PFD for their activity.

Children's activity day/stations

Organize a children's activity day. Set up activity stations in your location, and have groups of children move from station to station to participate in the activities.

Tips on organizing a children's activity day

1. Have participants sign up in advance. Make sure your numbers are manageable.
2. Don't be afraid to charge a nominal fee. It will cover material costs, and helps to ensure participant attendance.
3. Prior to the activity day, divide your participants into groups, based on age.
4. Plan your activities, and list the equipment you will require.
5. Each station should have a menu of activities appropriate for the range of age groups. It may simply be variations of the same activity, but it should be age appropriate.
6. Don't try to plan too many activities; however there should be at least the same number of stations as there are groups of children. Think about the time required for each activity at each station.
7. Do a safety check of the site and the activities prior to the event in order to prevent injuries or incidents. Change activities if there are safety concerns.
8. Ensure you have enough volunteers for each group of children. Keep the ratio of children to volunteers low.
9. Volunteers should move with the same group of children.
10. A nice way to end the day is with a drink and a snack for the children. See if you can find local sponsors that will provide hot dogs, a slice of pizza, or a juice for each child.
11. Thank your volunteers!

Boosting your promotions

Celebrity/local media spokesperson

A local celebrity can increase profile before and during your event.

- ◆ Consider which local celebrities you might approach: mayor, fire chief, police chief, radio or television on-air personality, newspaper columnist, local sports hero.
- ◆ Ask your celebrity to record promotional spots for radio in advance of the event.
- ◆ Ask the celebrity to participate in your event and speak to the media.

Event attraction

- ◆ Having a physical attraction for the public to view will increase the draw to your event, and may also attract additional media attention.
- ◆ Both fire and police departments have a community education division. Approach the department(s) to have rescue vehicle or safety equipment on view at your event location.
- ◆ If your event will be at a marina or waterfront, consider asking the Canadian Coast Guard or local police to provide their boats and a representative for public education. Often they use personal watercraft for rescues and may be willing to provide demonstrations.
- ◆ Consider asking canoe clubs, rowing clubs, marinas, scuba clubs, sailing schools, etc.

Community awards

- ◆ Present an award to someone who has contributed to community water safety, e.g. performed a rescue; provided safety education; installed a safety device, etc.
- ◆ Partner with a local service group to arrange an award presentation. They have a great deal of experience in arranging community service awards.
- ◆ Try to arrange the presentation in a public venue, where you can invite the media or where they are already present, e.g. City council meeting, sporting event, parade, spring festivals, fun run, etc.

Media

How to promote water safety through the media

Your local media can be a powerful partner in boosting awareness of your facility and your special event. With a few key steps, you can get your message out through radio, TV, daily newspapers and community or specialized publications.

1. **Plan** - once you have chosen an event and date, jot down a brief:

- ◆ **audience** (who am I targeting for this event?)
- ◆ **goals** (what do I hope to achieve – increase enrolment in water safety classes, promote PFD awareness?)
- ◆ **key messages** (what are the key points I need to put in my news release, and say during media interviews?)
- ◆ **action steps** (outline your plan – write a news release, send it to local media, follow up with phone calls, etc.)
- ◆ **evaluation** (did I get 100 people at the event, did enrolment increase, what went well/ what could be improved in my event and communications planning?)

2. **Prepare your materials** – key messages, news release, fact sheet.

3. **Send out your news release** a few days in advance of your event. Be sure to cover local radio, newspaper and television stations. *Tip:* When dealing with television make sure to tell them the “visuals” that you will have at your event.
4. **Keep a log of all media coverage** you receive, including press clippings. This will be helpful when you evaluate your activities

Key Messages

Why: be prepared, and your media interview will effectively promote your important messages.

When: you’ve invited the media to your event – be ready with the interview statements.

How: make a copy, and add your own messages from a local perspective.

- ◆ It is estimated 600 Canadians will drown this year.
- ◆ Drowning is among the leading causes of death from injury.
- ◆ Preparation and prevention are the key to safe, enjoyable water related activity.
- ◆ Drowning can be prevented by wearing a lifejacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for activities in, on and around the water.
- ◆ Choose a proper fitting, bright-coloured (yellow, orange or red) PFD with a Transport Canada or Canadian Coast Guard approved label.
- ◆ Children should wear a PFD when they are in, on and around the water – no matter how shallow.
- ◆ Supervision around the water is a full-time job; with no time off.
- ◆ Parents need to set an example by wearing PFDs and demonstrating water safe behaviour.
- ◆ Authorized Providers of the Canadian Red Cross Water Safety program are partners with the Canadian Red Cross in promoting Water Safety.
- ◆ Visit your local recreational swimming facility to participate in events during the summer.
- ◆ *Add your local key messages – upcoming events, swim classes, etc.*

News release

Sample news release to publicize an event. While this may not be exactly like your event, use this as a template to create your own release.

Long weekend kicks off boating season Event at <name of location> will focus on safety

(<City or town, date of release>) -- As the first long weekend of summer approaches and boaters take to the waterways, <name of facility> encourages <Victoria residents/Calgarians, etc> to be safe, in, on and around the water this summer.

“We know from our work with the Canadian Red Cross that more than 40% of drowning in Canada are related to boating,” says <name, title, name of facility.>

“In order to help boaters prepare for a safe and fun season, we’re holding a boating safety fair as part of the local boat show this upcoming weekend,” says <same name as above.>

The focus of the safety fair will be:

- <bullet points of what attendees could learn>
-

<Event details: where, when, cost, special features such as activities for children, etc.>

For more information about boating safety or about this event, please call <telephone number.>

-30-

For more information, or to book an interview:

Contact name
Contact title
telephone number

Article

What: Prepared articles are a great way to get your message across, and help out a local paper at the same time. Smaller papers, such as weeklies or community newspapers, often welcome ready-to-go articles.

How: Contact editors of local, small papers. Tell them about your story, and that you would be pleased to make it available to them. Another option is to send the article with a cover letter and fact sheet to weeklies and community papers in your area. Consider enclosing photos taken of people enjoying water safe activities in your facility.

Use this article template, or create your own using local information.

Have a water safe summer Wise choices make for fun in the sun

Learning to be safe in, on and around the water is the number one reason parents enroll their children in swimming lessons, a national Red Cross survey revealed. And while safety may begin with learning to swim, it continues through the choices parents make each time the family heads to the water this summer.

“According to Red Cross research, the risk of drowning can be significantly reduced if wise choices are made when participating in water related activities,” said <insert spokesperson’s name and title>. “The wisest choice is to insist children wear PFDs, and wear them properly.” Parents should also wear their own PFD, not only to set a good example for their children, but also to ensure their own safety.

While wearing a PFD is an important step, choosing the right PFD is equally important. Check for a snug, comfortable fit. Look for the *approved* label from Transport Canada or the Canadian Coast Guard. Select the best style for your water or boating activity, and a colour that increases visibility.

Once you select your PFD, take it for a trial run, right away. This is an important family activity that can be carried out at a supervised pool or waterfront. Put it on and float, move around and swim. You and your children will be thankful for the practice if you find yourself in an emergency situation.

If you’re confused about the difference between a PFD and a lifejacket, you’re not alone. A PFD is designed for flotation and keeping the head of a conscious person out of the water, in calm conditions. PFDs are less bulky, good for water active people and perform well in sheltered conditions, where help is close by. A lifejacket, on the other hand, is designed to turn an unconscious person into a face-up, head-out-of-the-water position. Lifejackets are more buoyant but also more bulky than PFDs.

Fact Sheet

Drowning statistics

- ◆ Injuries are the leading cause of death for Canadians aged 1 - 44 years.
- ◆ In 1998, 552 Canadians died from drowning and other water-related injuries.
- ◆ Children aged 1-4 and Aboriginal Peoples of all ages, have the highest death toll from drowning in Canada.
- ◆ Boating related deaths account for 41% of drowning deaths in Canada; most of these are related to recreational boating.
- ◆ Alcohol consumption is strongly associated with all types of injuries, including drowning. Two-thirds of all victims aged 15 years and older had consumed alcohol.
- ◆ In 1998, 80% of boaters who drowned were not wearing a flotation device, or it was worn incorrectly. These drowning deaths often occur in inland waters, usually within a few feet of safety.
- ◆ The presence of an adult is an important factor in prevention and in rescue for drowning incidents. In 1998, 94% of children aged 1-4 who drowned were alone or accompanied only by a minor.
- ◆ Lakes are the most frequent location for drowning in Canada, followed by rivers, the ocean, home swimming pools and bathtubs.

PFDs....the wise choice

- ◆ Changes to the law require each person on board a boat to have a Canadian approved PFD or lifejacket that **fits**. One-size-fits-all is no longer acceptable.
- ◆ Check for a proper, snug, comfortable fit and how well the PFD performs in water.
- ◆ Choose a style that is appropriate for your water or boating activity.
- ◆ Look for the Transport Canada or the Canadian Coast Guard approval label.
- ◆ A **PFD** is designed for flotation and will keep a conscious person's head out of the water in calm conditions. PFDs are comfortable to wear and are good for people who are confident in the water. They perform well in sheltered conditions, where help is close at hand.

- ◆ A **lifejacket** is designed to turn most unconscious persons into a face-up, head-out-of-the-water position. Lifejackets have much more buoyancy than PFDs and perform better in the water. However, they are more bulky and a little less comfortable to wear.
- ◆ Consider the need for visibility in the water, and the colour of your PFD. Orange, red and yellow PFDs are recommended for highest visibility.
- ◆ Try it out! In chest-deep water lift your legs off the bottom and put your head back. Make sure your chin is above the water and that you can breathe easily. Do this immediately after purchasing so that you know it is an appropriate product for you.

Choosing children's PFDs

- ◆ Children should always wear a PFD when they are in, on and around water, no matter how shallow the water.
- ◆ When purchasing a PFD for your child, make sure it fits. To check for a good fit, lift the child by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the child's chin and ears will not slip through. Look for features that will improve the fit and performance of the PFD like a safety strap between the legs, neck and waist ties and a large collar with a grab strap. Straps on a PFD should be used at all times – they keep the PFD in place.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to buy a PFD too large so the child can “grow into it”. A loose fitting PFD is dangerous. A PFD that is too large can't function properly or might slip off in the water.
- ◆ Parents should help children test their PFDs in shallow water. It is important that they get used to wearing one in the water.
- ◆ Set an example; wear your own PFD.