



Canadian Red Cross
Croix-Rouge canadienne

Swimming & Water Safety

A large rectangular area with a background of blue water ripples. In the center of this area is a white box with a red border containing the text 'Promotions Kit 2004'.

Promotions Kit
2004

Canadian Red Cross Swimming & Water Safety Promotions Kit

Welcome and thank you for taking the first step in helping Red Cross achieve its aim of preventing water-related injuries and fatalities.

Red Cross Swimming & Water Safety Services Aim and Goals:

Aim: To prevent water-related injuries and fatalities

Goal: To reduce drowning and water-related fatalities by providing Canadians with:

- the awareness and knowledge to recognize and avoid dangerous situations;
- the knowledge and skills required to save lives;
- the basic rescue skills to enable them to save others, and
- the knowledge and awareness to recognize hazardous environments and equipment in their communities and to provide solutions.

YOU are part of making this happen!

This kit is designed to help you make the most of your promotions this summer - whether you host public events, put your facility in the spotlight through media relations, or both!

Inside, you'll find event ideas, planning tips, and tools that will help you make the most of media opportunities ... and more.

Purpose of this kit

- To assist all interested Red Cross Water Safety partners - Authorized Providers, organizations and volunteers - as they organize Water Safety promotions.
- To encourage community participation and partnerships with the common aim of distributing important water safety messages.
- To provide resource information and activity suggestions for Water Safety Summer Promotions.

Who should read this kit?

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

For additional resources, check out these websites:

redcross.ca – The official Canadian Red Cross site offers information on water safety, drowning research and links to boating safety and partners.

boatsmartcanada.com – This Red Cross site contains everything you need to know about safe boating. Includes public service announcements, fact sheets and more.

ccg-gcc.gc.ca – A Canadian Coast Guard site where you can learn about Canadian boating regulations and enforcement.

boatsafetycampaign.com - A US site with resources for boating safety campaigns.



Hosting a public Event

The purpose of water safety promotions is to increase:

- public awareness of the importance of water safety and learning to swim
- the profile of your facility.

Step by step: planning a successful event

You may find **reverse goal setting** your easiest approach to planning an event. The process for reverse goal setting is quite simple: you begin by planning the end first. Pick an event, set a date and then go through the organizing process. Count back from the day of the event, setting realistic deadlines for you and your group. The following can be used as a planning checklist;

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

Ideas for your water safety event

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.



Tip #1 Buckles the Red Cross Water Safety Mascot can help promote your event! Contact your local Red Cross to book the Buckles costume.

Photos with Buckles

Set up a water safety information display.

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 in the classroom, recess or lunch. He could even attend a school event!

Colouring contest

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

Tip #2 Host your Water Safety event or display during peak times to maximise public awareness.

Design your own PFD

This can be part of your activity day, or a different type of colouring contest. Provide colouring 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-coloured PFDs are now Canadian government approved.*

Children can also design a poster for their own Water Safety Rule, using the same materials.

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.

Tip #3 Piggyback on other events being held in your area!

On the road

Arrange to set up a display at your local backyard pool dealer/supplier, home improvement store or marina. Hand out water safety materials, provide information on backyard pool safety.

Safety fair

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

Marinas, boat launches, sporting shows

There is no better place to spread the work about water safety than at the local marina, boat launch or boat show. Contact your local marina for dates and times. Advertise about the Pleasure Craft Operator License and how to get certified.

Tip #4 Start your WS events during Water Safety weeks; May 24-31 or June 6-12



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. Get certified with your PCO Card, and distribute water safety education sheets.

Children's activity day/stations



Canadian Red Cross – Ontario Zone
Swimming & Water Safety Promotions Kit

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

Tips on organizing a children's activity day



1. During a public swim have participants rotate through the stations.
2. Don't be afraid to charge a nominal fee above your public swim admission. It will cover material costs, and helps to ensure participant attendance.
3. Plan your activities, and list the equipment you will require.
4. 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.
5. Don't try to plan too many activities at each station, 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.
6. Be sure to book "Buckles" for the day!
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 station. Keep the ratio of participants to volunteers low.
9. Encourage parents and caregivers to participate.
10. Volunteers should move with the same group of participants or have extra volunteers to direct people.
11. 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 participant.
12. Thank your volunteers!

Suggested Stations: *Waterfront Beach Safety, Boating Safety, Backyard Pool Safety, PFD and Me, Rescue Breathing, Self-rescue Skills, Rescue of others, Choking & CPR, SunSmart Safety.*

Boosting your Promotions

Celebrity/local media spokesperson

A local celebrity can increase profile both 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 spokesperson to record promotional spots for radio in advance of the event.
- Ask the celebrity spokesperson to participate in your event and speak to 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 a 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. to help arrange a promotional event.
- Ask your Red Cross Program Consultant or Program Representative to be present.

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, fun run, etc.



Sample Letter inviting celebrities or media . . .

Date

Name

Address

Dear <insert name>:

Did you know that <insert key fact i.e. drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death and injury in Canada today>? It is this fact that has prompted the <insert facility, municipality, organization> to host a <insert name of event> at <insert location>. The goal of this event will be to raise public awareness about the importance of <water safety, PFDs, safe diving etc.>.

We would be pleased if you would agree to participate in the <event name> to help us raise awareness of this important issue. The event will be taking place on <date> from <time> and we would like to invite you to be on hand to <insert what you would like local celebrity/personality to do>.

We will be advertising the event by <insert methods of advertising> and it would help us raise the profile of <event name> if we could mention your participation in our promotions.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important initiative that aims to decrease the risk of <drowning, spinal injuries, boating fatalities etc.> for the residents of <insert municipality>.

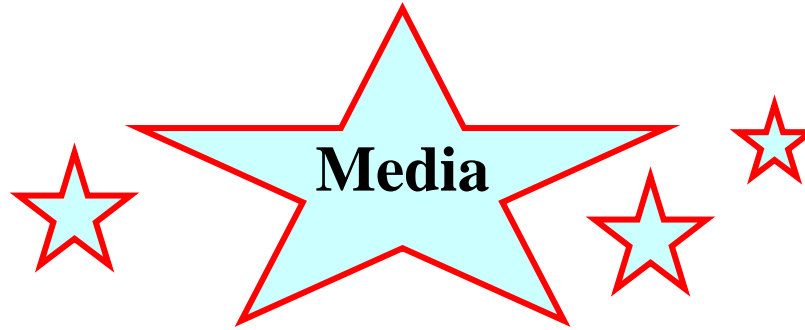
I would be pleased to discuss the event with you in person or by phone. You can reach me at <insert phone number>. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Phone Number



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.

Plan - Once you have chosen an event and date, jot down a brief plan:

- **audience** (who am I targeting with this event?)
- **goals** (what do I hope to achieve - get 100 people out to see Buckles, increase enrolment in water safety classes, promote PFD awareness?)
- **volunteers** (who do I need to involve in this event?)
- **key messages** (what are the important things I need to put in my news release and say during media interviews?)
- **action steps** (what needs to get done to achieve my goals?)
- **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?)

Prepare your materials - key messages, news release, fact sheet.

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, tell them the “visuals” you will have at your event.

Keep a log of all media coverage you receive, including press clippings. This will help you evaluate your event.



Key Messages

Why you need them: to be prepared, so your media interview will get your important message across and demonstrate your expertise.

When to use them: you've invited the media to your event - be ready with the statements you want to make during an interview.

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

- It is estimated that 600 Canadians will drown this year.
- Drowning is among the leading causes of death from injury.
- Preparation and prevention is the key to safe, enjoyable water related activity.
- Get trained: learn to swim and learn how to properly operate your boat. Wear a lifejacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while boating.
- 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 take Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety lessons.
- *Add your local key messages - upcoming events, swim classes, etc.*

SOME SAFE DIVING STATISTICS

- Diving is the leading sports-related cause of spinal-cord injuries.
- Many diving incidents result in quadriplegia – a partial or complete loss of functioning in both legs, arms and the trunk area.
- 95% of diving injuries occur in water 5 feet deep or less, in an unsupervised setting with no warning signs.
- Injuries can occur from diving into ocean surf, lakes, rivers, quarries and swimming pools.
- The average diving-related spinal injury casualty is male, 17-22 years old, with no formal training in diving.
- Over 50% of diving injuries/deaths involve alcohol and/or drug abuse.
- Statistics show that spinal-cord injuries are rare during supervised diving into water 9 feet or deeper.
- Safe diving depth is relative to each person's height, weight and skill level.

News release

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

This long weekend – stay water safe

Event at <name of location> will focus on safety

(<City or town, date of release>) -- As the next long weekend of summer approaches and boaters take to the waterways, **<name of facility>** encourages **<Manitoba 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 close to 40% of drownings 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.>**

For more information, or to book an interview:

Contact name

Contact title

Telephone number

Articles

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 of people enjoying water safe activities.

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

Think safety before swimming

Summer will soon be here, but before heading to the local pool, beach or river, the Red Cross encourages everyone to take a moment to think about water safety.

Toddlers and infants are a group at risk although there has been a significant reduction in the drownings in this age group in the 1990s. There was a 40% decrease in drownings of one to four year old toddlers and 80% in infants less than one year old. This dramatic change corresponds with extensive research-based revisions of Red Cross national swimming and water safety programs and education campaigns by many agencies across Canada.

There's still room for improvement, however. Toddlers drown mainly in swimming pools without self-closing and self-latching gates. If all home pools were equipped with this simple and inexpensive device, nearly all toddler pool drownings and about one-third of all toddler drownings could be eliminated.

To reduce the risk, the Red Cross recommends the following safety tips when diving and swimming:

Diving:

- Neck and back injuries are common after diving incidents and can result in permanent paralysis.
- One of the major causes of spinal injuries is drinking and diving. Young men are at greatest risk.
- The majority of backyard pools are NOT designed for diving.
- Never dive into above ground pools.
- Think before you dive.
- Ensure water is at least 10 feet deep. Remember the depth of lakes or oceans can change due to tides or seasons.
- Ensure water is deep enough for the entire path of the dive, and that no rocks or debris are in the way. The length of a typical dive depends on a variety of factors, such as height of dive and size of diver.

Swimming:

- Learn proper swimming and safety techniques by enrolling children in Canadian Red Cross water safety classes.
- Be aware of your limitations. Don't go beyond your ability.
- When swimming in the ocean, be aware of the tides and currents and keep an eye on the shifting weather patterns.
- Know the signs of hypothermia.
- Supervise children at all times.
- Fence backyard pools and ensure gates have self-locking latches.
- Communicate and post pool rules. Keep emergency equipment and first aid kits close at hand.

Fact Sheet

Drowning statistics

- Injuries are the leading cause of death for Canadians aged 1 - 44 years.
- In 1999, 503 Canadians died from drowning and other water-related injuries.
- Children aged one to four and Aboriginal peoples of all ages have the highest death toll from drowning in Canada.
- Boating related deaths account for 40% 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 1999, 90% 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 1999, 63% of children aged one to four 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.