



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**

# SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY

## PUBLIC EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE



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## INTRODUCTION

Canadians enjoy an abundance of aquatic activities through thousands of waterfronts (ocean, lakes, rivers, and private pools) and recreational facilities. Tragically, hundreds of Canadians die each year in water-related fatalities.

The Canadian Red Cross is committed to preventing water-related injuries and fatalities. Each year, we raise awareness through messaging and promotional materials during the spring/summer season, focusing on two main campaigns which target key groups for drowning incidents - boaters and children.

On the Thursday prior to the first long weekend of summer (Victoria Day), the Red Cross marks National Lifejacket Day (May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016). This day raises awareness around the effectiveness of lifejackets in drowning prevention, and also promotes lifejacket use. The first full week in June (June 4<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016) is Water Safety Week, which targets water safety for children and promotes the value of learning to swim.

We encourage all of our partners to join us in promoting these campaigns, and also to organize your own water safety events and promotions throughout the summer.

Inside this resource guide, you'll find event ideas, planning tips and tools that will help you make the most of your water safety promotions. These initiatives are also designed to help raise the profile of your business, facility or organization. Training Partners who participate in these special events can obtain free promotional items including posters and tattoos. Promotional tools are available at [www.shop.redcross.ca](http://www.shop.redcross.ca) while quantities last.

Thank you for partnering with Canadian Red Cross to bring water safety messages to your community and helping us to achieve our aim of preventing water-related injuries and fatalities.

## RED CROSS SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY AIM AND GOALS

**Aim:** To improve the quality of life by giving people the skills to make safe choices, increase physical fitness, prevent injuries and act in emergency and rescue situations.

**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!**

### PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- To assist all interested Red Cross Water Safety partners - Training Partners, organizations and volunteers - to organize and make the most of their water safety events and 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 Resource Guide?

- Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Training Partners
- Red Cross Water Safety volunteers
- Community organization members
- Anyone interested in a water safe community!

## DROWNING RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

### DROWNING STATISTICS

For many Canadian families, summer includes activities such as boating and swimming. But each year, tragic and avoidable water-related fatalities occur across Canada. Data on water-related fatalities collected annually by the Canadian Red Cross revealed many common factors:

- A small child can disappear in seconds and can drown in only a few centimetres of water— enough to cover the mouth and nose. Typically these drownings occur in backyard pools, toddler pools, the bathtub, or at the beach.
- Infants and toddlers drowned mainly in bathtubs and pools, whereas older children and youth drowned mainly in large bodies of water.
- Most swimming pool drownings occurred in single-unit home pools. Of these, 50% involved 1-4 year old toddlers, nearly all in pools with inadequate safety gates.
- Other factors for adults in water-related fatalities included currents and alcohol consumption.
- Our extensive research into why and how people drown indicates the majority of incidents occur from unexpected falls into water. Individuals did not intend to enter the water and therefore are fully clothed at the time of the incident. These unexpected falls into water represent almost 19% of the drownings in Canada.
- Males aged 15-74 are at the highest risk of drowning, accounting for nearly 87% of boating related deaths from 1991-2010. The one reoccurring factor in these deaths is the absence of a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD).
- Recreational boating accounts for more than one third of drownings in Canada and the majority of cases occurred because the victim was not wearing a PFD. A PFD is useless if it is not being worn properly.
- Among Indigenous peoples, as many as 80% of boating deaths may have had no PFD present. Nearly half of child boating victims during 1991-2010 were indigenous and none of them were wearing a life jacket or PFD when they drowned.

#### **The Importance of Water Safety Skills and Knowledge**

Though important, swimming skills alone aren't always enough to save a life. Many drowning incidents involve other factors that swimming skills alone cannot prepare an individual for.

Learning water safety—such as how to prepare for an emergency, and what to do if one should occur—is key to preventing an emergency in or on the water. Swimming skills combined with water safety knowledge and skills saves lives.

The Red Cross Swim program teaches both swimming skills and water safety. The infant and preschool program, Red Cross Swim Preschool, teaches caregivers strategies on how to effectively supervise children around water and teaches preschoolers not to go near the water without an adult.

**For more information on drowning research visit <http://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimming-and-water-safety-tips-and-resources/drowning-research>**

## WATER SAFETY TIPS AND RESOURCES

### The Circle of Drowning Prevention

Layers of protection are essential to help prevent drowning. It is essential to plan ahead for aquatic activities. Follow

the 5

help

Circle

activities. Follow layers of protection to promote and reinforce the of Drowning Prevention:



#### Constant supervision of children

- The absence of adult supervision is a factor in most child drownings.
- Whether it's a pool, the bathtub, a water park, or the beach, always watch children actively around water—even if they can swim.
- Consider requiring all non-swimmers to wear a lifejacket to keep them at the surface to assist you while supervising.

#### Fence Backyard pools

- Backyard pools are especially dangerous for small children. Ensure adequate barriers are in place such as four-sided fencing along with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Empty portable toddler pools after each use.

### Learn to Swim

- Ensure children learn basic swimming and water safety skills

### Wear a lifejacket

- Always wear a lifejacket or PFD. Ensure all boaters in the craft are wearing one.

### Swim in a lifeguard area

- Always swim in a lifeguarded area. Check the weather conditions before venturing into the water and obey signs and signals (such as flags) indicating whether the water is safe to enter.

For more information on water safety tips and resources, including boating safety, diving safety and more visit <http://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimming-and-water-safety-tips-and-resources>

## ORGANIZING WATER SAFETY EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

### 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
- Increase the profile of your facility

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.

### Suggested Events Checklist

There are many different ways to participate in water safety promotional activities, whether you decide to host several smaller initiatives throughout the summer or focus your efforts on one big event.

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.  
Contact your local Program Representative to 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/or event media advisory and distribute to local media outlets, inviting them to your event.  
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 confirm if they will attend and cover the event.  
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.

### **Event ideas and initiatives:**

#### ***Special Days***

Consider focusing activities on one day each week of the summer. Some examples may include: Hats-On-Tuesdays, Funky-Sunglass-Friday, Bottled-Water- Brigade-Monday. Involve your facility staff to help get the message across that having Water Safety events can be fun and 'cool'. Hand out tattoos to all clients who participate - particularly kids. Inform participants of the activity through posters, at their swim classes, or when they check in at the front desk.

#### ***Working the Show***

Check your local community calendar to determine when there may be trade shows or events on home improvement, boating, gardening, etc. Call organizers and request space to set up a water safety display as a public service. Provide materials highlighting your facility's upcoming events and lessons. Provide activity sheets, brochures, stickers and tattoos.

**Tip #1-** Start your WS events before National Lifejacket Day, continue through Water Safety Week and throughout the summer

### ***Create a Carnival***

Recruit other partners or local organizations to participate in your water safety event. Police, Fire Departments or other organizations that provide safety information to the general public may be interested in joining you to offer a presentation, set-up an information booth with safety equipment, or park a rescue vehicle for tours at your facility. Invite local restaurants interested in promoting their business by providing healthy food samples. Consider hosting a mascot race should other participating organizations have mascots to create some excitement and fun. Contact your local Red Cross office to book the Buckles mascot.

### ***Be Safe, Be Free***

Offer free admission to recreational swimming on the day of your Water Safety event to all clients that demonstrate sun safety, eat healthy snack choices, or who register for Red Cross Swim classes on that day.

### ***Healthy Active Lifestyles***

Partner with your local canoe, rowing or scuba club to host a race or demonstration at your pool. A key message of Water Safety events is about ensuring you plan for your nutrition and sun safety needs while being active in, on and around the water.

### ***Lifejacket/PFD fashion show/ Photo Contest***

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 #2-** 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.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***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.



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

### ***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.

### ***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. Distribute water safety education sheets.

**Tip #4** - Host your Water Safety event or display during peak times to maximize public awareness.

### ***Host Water Safety Demonstrations***

Organize a Water Safety demonstration once every two weeks. These could be open to the general public, at a scheduled time, or take 10 minutes out of your general public swims. Demonstrations could include: Reaching/Throwing Assists; How to Call 9-1-1; How to use your lifejacket (Help, Huddle), Lifejacket Fitting Days etc.

### ***Children's activity day/stations***

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.*

## Event Promotions & Media Relations

Hosting a water safety event or participating in any of the other suggested promotional initiatives will provide an opportunity to promote your facility and programs. Below are some suggestions to help increase your facility's profile:

Your local media and social media networks can be powerful partners and tools in boosting awareness of your facility and your special event. With a few key steps, you may get your message out through radio, TV, daily newspapers and community or specialized publications, as well as social channels.

**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 swimming lessons or 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/or media advisory 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 and/or media advisory, community newsletter article and social media calendar.

**Send out your news release and/or media advisory** a week in advance of your event. Be sure to cover local radio, newspaper and television stations. When dealing with television, tell them the "visuals" you will have at your event. If you are using social media to promote your event, mention in your news release that you will be publishing social media posts leading up to, during and after the event. Review the social media guidelines listed below before preparing your social media content.

**Event listings** – send your event information from your media advisory to all event listings in your community. Don't forget to register your event with online event listings as well. Distribute event flyers to your swimming classes as a cross promotion.

**Submit a feature article to your community newsletter** – this can be done leading up to your event, or after it is complete. If you aren't hosting a water safety event, you can still submit an article on the importance of water safety in the summer to your community newsletter.

**Colouring contest** - pitch the idea of a colouring contest with a water safety blackline picture to your community paper. If they are unable to offer complimentary space as a public service, approach a sponsor to pay for the space in exchange for co-hosting the colouring contest. Work with your community paper to print the winning pictures on their community or kid's page.

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

## RED CROSS SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES: ONE-PAGE REFERENCE

### SUMMARY

We appreciate the key role that staff and volunteers using social media play in helping the Canadian Red Cross reach its communication goals. Some key guidelines to keep in mind:

1. **Be a good ambassador.** Whether you have identified yourself as being associated with the Canadian Red Cross or not, your posts online may be interpreted as being the official voice of the Canadian Red Cross.
2. **Remember that “personal” and “private” are not the same.** Written conversations inside social media networks can often be found through search engines such as Google. Be aware that choosing to use a disclaimer (Example: “The postings on this site are my own and do not reflect the positions of my employer.”) does not change your obligations under the Canadian Red Cross Code of Conduct or the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.
3. **Observe neutrality at all times.** While all Fundamental Principles are important, neutrality is especially relevant to social media – according to the IFRC, “do not publicly express any opinions on events connected with political affairs or engage in political activities that could reflect adversely” on the Red Cross. However, this does not mean you can’t “follow” or “friend” political leaders/organizations.
4. **Do not use the emblem or Red Cross logo.** You cannot use the emblem or logo in your social media, unless you “share” or “retweet” an official Red Cross social media channel, or have permission from your director of Public Affairs.
5. **Respect the privacy of clients, employees, and volunteers (and protect your own privacy).**
6. **Never reveal confidential or sensitive details regarding Canadian Red Cross clients, employees or volunteers.** Please respect their right to privacy and do not take photos or videos without their permission. This also includes people’s homes that have been devastated by a disaster. In addition, do not post anything about minors without special permission from Public Affairs. You should also be careful to attribute any images to the photographer.
7. **Respond to concerns and correct your own mistakes in a positive way.** If you come across a misrepresentation of the Red Cross, please contact your Director of Public Affairs to determine the best way to resolve the concern. In making approved corrections, be respectful and only provide facts.
8. **Stay focused on your job.** While the Canadian Red Cross encourages use of social media and recognizes that these can be a valuable resource, ensure that your online activities do not interfere with your position at work or on deployment.

9. **Use your best judgment and consult the Public Affairs team for advice.** Do not publish anything that you are unsure of. We're here to help – just ask your representative on the Social Media Team or the Public Affairs team for advice. You should also refer to the full Canadian Red Cross Social Media Guidelines.

## Boosting your Promotions

### Invite a 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 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 Representative or Buckles 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.
- 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.

**For additional resources, check out these websites:**

[redcross.ca](http://redcross.ca) – The Canadian Red Cross website offers information on water safety, drowning research and links to boating safety and partners.

[Shop.redcross.ca](http://shop.redcross.ca) – Order water safety promotional items such as posters, tattoos, stickers

[boatsmartcanada.com](http://boatsmartcanada.com) – This site contains everything you need to know about safe boating. Includes online boating course, safe boating guide and more.

[cgg-gcc.gc.ca](http://cgg-gcc.gc.ca) – A Canadian Coast Guard site where you can learn about Canadian boating regulations and enforcement.

[boatsafetycampaign.com](http://boatsafetycampaign.com) - A US site with resources for boating safety campaigns.

### **Follow us on Social Media!**

Water Safety Week: Join the **#WaterSafety** discussion online.

[twitter.com/redcrosscanada](https://twitter.com/redcrosscanada) | [twitter.com/croixrouge\\_qc](https://twitter.com/croixrouge_qc)  
[facebook.com/canadianredcross](https://facebook.com/canadianredcross) | [facebook.com/CroixRougeQuebec](https://facebook.com/CroixRougeQuebec)  
[instagram.com/redcrosscanada](https://instagram.com/redcrosscanada)

## Appendix A - Sample Letter inviting celebrities or media personalities

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

## Appendix B - Letter Requesting Partner Participation

Date

Name

Address

Dear *(insert name)*:

This summer the *(insert your facility name here)* in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross and program sponsors, and , will be hosting a water safety event here in *(your location name)*.

The goal of our water safety event is to promote three important messages about fun in the summer time:

1. Be safe in, on and around the water by getting trained,
2. always supervising children around water, and
3. wearing your lifejacket when boating;

We would be pleased if *(insert organization's name, i.e. the Brent Bay Search and Rescue Association)* would agree to participate in our event by *(detail your request, i.e. provide a rescue vehicle for tours, provide safety information, speech, etc.)*

Our event will take place on *(date)* from *(time)*. We will be *(details of event)*.

Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative. I will call you in the days ahead to answer any questions you may have and provide further details.

Sincerely

*(your name, title, phone)*

## Appendix C- Media Key Messages

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

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

**How to use key messages:** make a copy, add your own messages from a local perspective, and review them together with your pre-identified media spokespeople.

### ***Key Messages***

- National Lifejacket Day and Water Safety Week are national Red Cross campaigns designed to educate Canadians about water safe behaviour.
- Make drowning prevention a priority when out on the water by taking three important steps:
  1. Be safe in, on and around the water by getting trained,
  2. always supervising children around water, and
  3. wearing your lifejacket when boating;
- Check out [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) for more water safety tips and resources.
- *(Your facility name here)* now proudly offers the new Red Cross Swim program. The new Red Cross Swim program focuses on both swimming skills and water safety with a greater emphasis on personal fitness.
- *(Your facility name here)* now offers Red Cross Swim Preschool – a seven-level program to help young children learn water safety skills at an even earlier age.
- Learning to swim is important, but learning water safety is key to knowing what to do in an emergency in or on the water.
- The Canadian Red Cross trains more than 1 million children each year keeping them safer in and around the water. The new Red Cross Swim program continues the 60-year legacy of Canadian Red Cross swimming and water safety lessons.
- To learn more about Red Cross Swim and to sign up for lessons, visit *(your facility website here)* or [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca).

## Appendix D - Template Media Advisory

### <Facility name> teaching summer water safety to families at <event name>

**CITY, month, day, year** – As the <next long weekend of summer> approaches and boaters take to the water, <name of facility> is hosting a family event to encourage <location> residents to be safe, in, on and around the water this summer.

**WHO:** Residents of <location> who enjoy aquatic activities are all encouraged to come out for a <day/morning/afternoon> of fun learning. To participate in the fun, call or email <facility name>

**WHEN:** <insert date and time of event, and if limited spokesperson availability, note here>

**WHERE:** <insert location details>

**WHAT:** Activities at our water safety event will include:

- <List activities and learnings>
- <Mention if there will be a cost to the event>

We welcome media to attend the event, and <facility name> spokesperson <insert name> will be available for interviews throughout the day.

#### **For more information:**

To learn more about water safety and <event title>, or to confirm media attendance and schedule an interview, please contact:

<name, title>

<facility/company name>

<phone, email>

#### **About <facility name>**

<Insert boilerplate/ background information about your facility>

## Appendix E - Template News Release

### <Facility name> urges parents to keep kids safe this summer water season

<City, month, day, year> — This summer the <your facility name here> reminds <your city name here> to have a safe summer when you and your family are out on the water by taking three important steps:

1. Get trained to be safe in and on the water
2. Always supervise children around water
3. Always wear a lifejacket when boating

Every year, an average of 518 Canadians die needlessly in unintentional water-related incidents. The majority of those incidents - 57 per cent - occur during the summer months. Children and young men are at the highest risk of death from unexpectedly falling into water.

“Swimming skills alone aren’t always enough to save a life,” says <insert facility spokesperson name, title>. “Learning to swim is important, but learning water safety is key to preventing an emergency in or on the water. Swimming skills combined with safety knowledge and skills saves lives.”

The <insert facility name> Red Cross Swim program teaches both swimming and water safety skills, by focusing on fitness and personal achievement, and offers levels for preschool children to youth. Red Cross Swim Preschool focuses on providing caregivers with safety skills, knowledge and strategies on how to effectively supervise children around water.

“Whether it’s a pool, the bathtub, or the beach, always watch children actively around water – even if they can swim,” stresses <spokesperson last name>. “Parents and caregivers need to be vigilant at all times when children have access to any body of water. Requiring all non-swimmers to wear a lifejacket will keep them at the surface and assist you while supervising.”

To help promote water safety, the <your facility name> is hosting a <describe your event and include time and date, along with location and other details>.

#### **About <facility name>**

<Insert boilerplate or background information about your facility>

#### **For more information on the event or to interview a water safety spokesperson, contact:**

<name, title>  
<facility/company name>  
<phone, email>

## Appendix F - Community Newsletter or Newspaper Article

**What:** Prepared articles are a great way to get your message across, and help out a local newsletter or 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 or community newsletters. Tell them about your story, and that you would be pleased to make it available to them. Consider enclosing photos of people enjoying safe water activities.

***Use template, or write your own article using local information.***

### Community Newsletter/Newspaper Article

#### Water safety must be a priority for <local town/region/city> residents

Drowning deaths are preventable, and <Facility name> is strongly urging Canadians to make water safety a priority this summer season.

Every year, an average of 518 Canadians die needlessly in unintentional water-related incidents. The majority of those incidents – 57 per cent - occur during the summer months. Children and young men are at the highest risk of death from unexpectedly falling into water.

The following tips will help ensure being around the water is not only fun but safe for residents of <city/region/town name>.

#### **Constant supervision of children**

- The absence of adult supervision is a factor in most child drownings.
- Whether it's a pool, the bathtub, a water park, or the beach, always watch children actively around water—even if they can swim.
- Consider requiring all non-swimmers to wear a lifejacket to keep them at the surface to assist you while supervising.

#### **Fence Backyard pools**

- Backyard pools are especially dangerous for small children. Ensure adequate barriers are in place such as four-sided fencing along with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Empty portable toddler pools after each use.

#### **Learn to Swim**

- Ensure children learn basic swimming and water safety skills

### **Wear a lifejacket**

- Always wear a lifejacket or PFD. Ensure all boaters in the craft are wearing one.

### **Swim in a lifeguarded area**

- Always swim in a lifeguarded area. Check the weather conditions before venturing into the water and obey signs and signals (such as flags) indicating whether the water is safe to enter.

### **Get trained**

Before you head out this weekend, leave yourself a note to sign up for swimming lessons or first aid training.

- Sign up kids, teens and adults for <training facility name> [Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety lessons](#).
- Sign up for <training facility name> Red Cross First Aid classes or recertify your current skills. Visit [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) and click on “Training and Certification” to find a course in your community.
- Call 1-877-356-3226 to learn more about Red Cross training.

“Swimming skills alone aren’t always enough to save a life,” says <spokesperson name>. “Learning to swim is important, but learning water safety is key to preventing an emergency in or on the water. Swimming skills combined with safety knowledge and skills saves lives.”

For <facility name> summer water safety events, visit <insert website name>. For more safety tips and information on Canadian Red Cross training programs, visit [www.redcross.ca/swim](http://www.redcross.ca/swim).