




Open Water Safety Report Card and Policy Training

February & March 2011



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION



Introductions

Training Overview: Objectives and Agenda

Objectives

- ✓ **Understand your role in the Open Water Safety Report Card (OWSRC) pilot project.**
- ✓ **Learn to use the OWSRC and Community Open Water Safety Report Card (COWSRC).**
- ✓ **Support work in open water drowning prevention by getting involved in “Open Water Drowning Prevention: Policy Strategies for Children and Youth, 2011-2016”.**

Pilot Project: Roles and Responsibilities

Safe Kids Coalitions

- Pilot test the draft Open Water Safety Report Card (OWSRC) and Community Open Water Safety Report Card (COWSRC).
- Work on at least one local and one state policy action to improve water safety and drowning risk reduction efforts.
- Make at least one presentation to a policy body in your county.
- Provide feedback on OWSRC and COWSRC.
- Present pilot test results and process to the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network.

Seattle Children's & WA State DOH

- Develop and revise OWSRC and COWSRC.
- Provide in person training to Safe Kids Coalitions working on pilot.
- Provide technical assistance via phone and email throughout the testing phase.

Agenda

- **Introductions** 10 min
- **Washington State: Open Water Drowning** 10 min
- **What is Policy?** 40 min
- **Open Water Drowning Prevention: Policy Strategies for Children and Youth, 2011-2016** 30 min
- **Break** 10 min
- **Report Cards** 55 min

Agenda Continued

- **Break** 10 min
- **Statewide Drowning Prevention Policy Change** 20 min
- **Presenting to Local Policymakers** 30 min
- **Next Steps: Discussion with Safe Kids Coordinator**
10 min
- **Training Evaluation and Thank You** 15 min

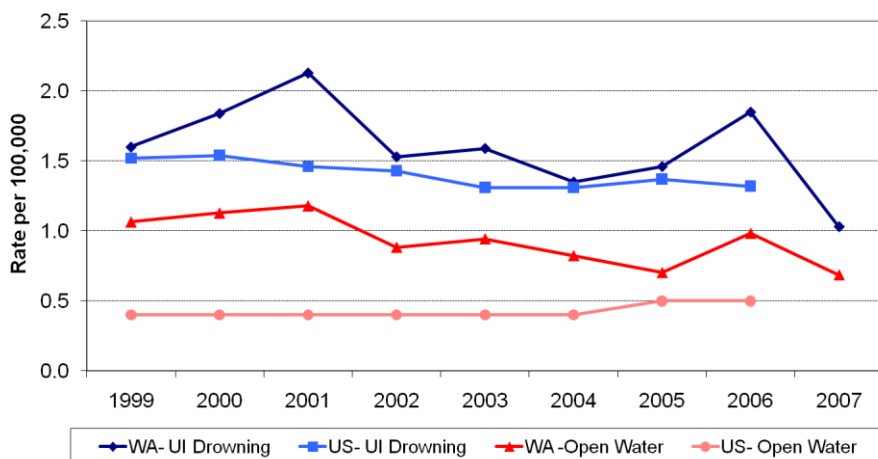
Washington State
Open Water Drowning



Definition: Open Water

- Open water includes lakes, rivers, ocean, Puget Sound, ponds, irrigation ditches, and canals.
- Open water does not include pools, hot tubs, spas, bathtubs, and buckets.

Drowning Rates, US and WA

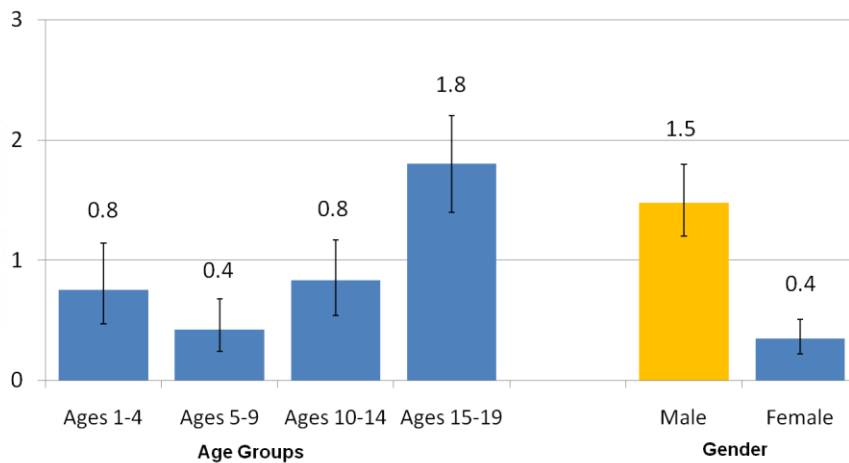


Source US Data: CDC Wonder & Wisqars

Risk Factors for Open Water Drowning

- Age: teen, young adult
- Gender: Males
- Nonwhite/ethnic minority
- Alcohol use
- Teens-in water activities esp. swimming in lakes and rivers;
Young children-playing in or near water
- Boating: No PFD use
- No lifeguards

Open Water Drowning Rates by Age and Gender



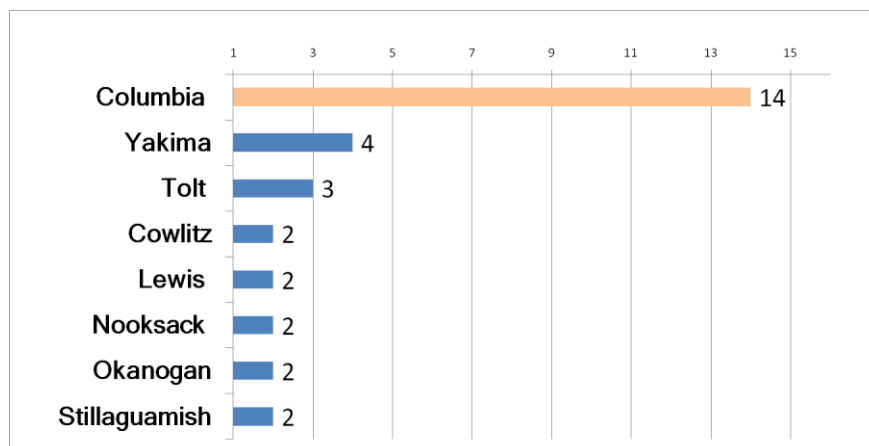
Source: Death Certificates,
1999-2007

Activity at Time of Drowning

Activity	%
Boating	7%
Swimming	35%
Playing near water	23%
Playing in water	19%
On raft/ innertube	7%
Unknown	5%
Other	3%

Source: Child Death Review
1999-2007

Washington River Drownings All Ages



Source: 2009 News Clippings

What is Policy?

What is Policy?

- **Policy is a tool, just like education, media campaigns, social marketing, signage, etc.**
- **Good policy supports good programs.**
- **Definition: Policies are laws, regulations, formal and informal rules, and understandings that are adopted on a collective basis to guide individual and collective behavior.**

Spectrum of Prevention

The Spectrum of Prevention



Retrieved from <http://www.preventioninstitute.org> on October 13, 2010. Model originally developed by [Larry Cohen](#) director of the [Contra Costa Health Services Prevention Program](#), the *Spectrum* is based on the work of Dr. Marshall Swift in treating developmental disabilities. It has been used nationally in prevention initiatives targeting traffic safety, violence prevention, injury prevention, nutrition, and fitness.

Source: CDC Child Injury Prevention Policy Training

What factors influence policy?

- **Social**
- **Scientific**
- **Economic**
- **Legal**
- **Political**
- **Practical**

Who influences policy?

- **Everyone can!**
- **Victims & their families – puts a real person on the issue (rafting example)**
- **Business**
- **Recreation & environmental advocates**
- **Legislators**
- **Schools**
- **Who else?**

Role of State and Local Health Departments

- **Assess/analyze policies.**
- **Convene interested groups to develop a plan for establishing policy strategies.**
- **Use data and science to educate decision makers about the components and potential effects of policies.**
- **Increase public awareness of existing policies or laws.**
- **Evaluate the impact of policies – do they work?**

Source: CDC Child Injury Prevention Policy Training

Types and Levels of Policy

- **Organizational**
 - Local education agencies and/or schools or school districts
 - Private hospital or other healthcare delivery sites
 - Community-based organizations
 - Governmental agencies such as parks departments or public health
 - Professional associations or accrediting organizations

- **Regulatory**
 - City
 - County
 - State
 - Federal

- **Legislative**
 - Local
 - State
 - Federal

Source: CDC Child Injury Prevention Policy Training

Stakeholder Analysis

- **What is a stakeholder analysis?**
 - Any approach or tool for generating knowledge about key organizations/people to:
 - Understand their behavior, intentions, values, and interests on an issue
 - Assess their influence and resources on decision-making

- **When to use a stakeholder analysis**
 - Useful at any stage of the policy process:
 - Determine allies and opponents of policy
 - Create coalitions among supporters
 - Assess the feasibility of policy passage
 - Plan implementation efforts
 - Critical for successful promotion and implementation of policy efforts.

Stakeholder Analysis definition and tools adapted from Varvasovszky Z and Brugha R (2000). How to do (or not to do) ... A stakeholder analysis. Health Policy and Planning 15(3): 338-343.

Source: CDC Child Injury Prevention Policy Training

Stakeholder Analysis

Require Life Jackets on all Rivers in County: Stakeholder Log					
Interest Groups					
Stakeholder	Characteristics				
	Involvement in the Issue	Interest in the Issue	Influence /Power	Position	Strategy to Apply
Schools	*Directly affected by the policy *Youth recreate on rivers * School groups use rivers	Varies by proximity to water	Medium	Supports	Partner with school to advocate for PFD use on river
Rafting Companies					

Source: CDC Child Injury Prevention Policy Training

Washington State Open Water Drowning Prevention: Policy Strategies for Children and Youth

Background

- **State and local policy strategies to improve open water safety and prevent open water drownings.**
- **Based on data, best practices, and recommendations from the Washington State Child and Youth Drowning Prevention Policy Task Force, Washington State Drowning Prevention Network, and many other stakeholders.**
- **Focuses on seven action areas:**
 1. Safer Water Recreation Sites
 2. Life Jackets
 3. Boating Under the Influence and Open Water Enforcement
 4. Surveillance
 5. Swimming Skills and Water Safety Education
 6. Physical Open Water Barriers
 7. Partnerships

Policy Priorities and Strategies, 2011-2012

SAFER WATER RECREATION SITES

- ✓ Identify existing water recreation safety standards for bathing beaches, swim areas, and other high use water recreation areas.
- ✓ Research and compile best practices for water safety signs and symbols.

LIFE JACKETS

- ✓ Improve WA State child life law to require children 12 and under to wear life jackets on all boats (and ultimately for children 17 and under).
- ✓ Increase number of life jacket loaner programs at sites used by swimmers and boaters.
- ✓ Promote life jacket use at city, county, and state parks.
- ✓ Develop and promote standard signage for life jacket loaner programs.

BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (BUI)

- ✓ Strengthen WA State's BUI law, to include implied consent and increase penalties, including a tie to the driver's license.

Policy Priorities and Strategies, 2011-2012

SURVEILLANCE

- ✓ Add questions on swimming ability and use of designated/lifeguarded swim areas to the State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS).
- ✓ Identify all available data sources and content on child and youth open water drowning.
- ✓ Conduct life jacket observations of recreational boaters and develop plan to repeat every three years.

SWIMMING SKILLS AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

- ✓ Increase access to swimming, especially among low-income and culturally diverse children, youth, and families.

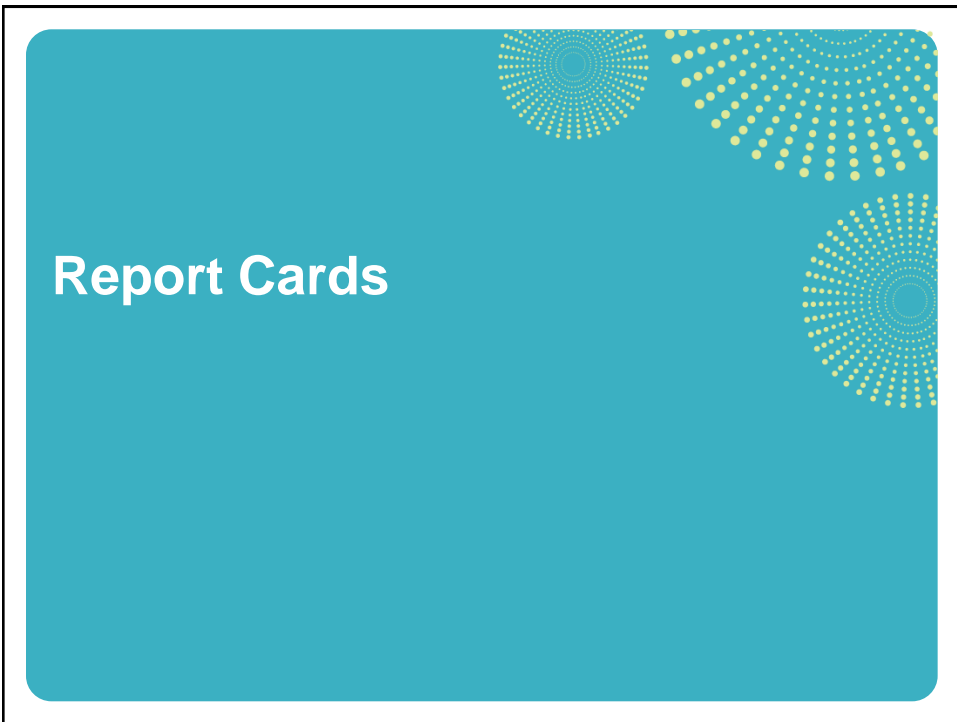
PHYSICAL OPEN WATER BARRIERS

- ✓ None identified for 2011-2012.
- ✓ 2013-2016 Strategy: Identify and promote standards for fencing around irrigation ditches and private ponds. Research what other states have done.

Policy Priorities and Strategies, 2011-2012

PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ Build partnerships with organizations, associations, and coalitions involved in water safety and water recreation.
- ✓ Create opportunities for networking and collaboration on drowning prevention, water safety and water recreation.
- ✓ Identify policy priorities for the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network.
- ✓ Build organizational partnerships around open water drowning prevention policy.



Purpose

Washington State Department of Health and Seattle Children's have developed an Open Water Safety Report Card (OWSRC) and Community Open Water Safety Report Card (COWSRC) to:

- Assess open water safety at water recreation sites and in a community.
- Identify gaps in open water safety.
- Identify policies to eliminate gaps in open water safety.
- Assist community members and organizations with presenting gaps and policy solutions to policymakers.

Report Card Development

- **Reviewed existing public health, education, and environment report cards and report card toolkits.**
- **Identified indicators of open water safety.**
- **Identified benchmarks for each indicator.**
- **Reviewed and revised report card based on recommendations from the leadership team and water safety and recreation experts.**

Types of Report Cards

OPEN WATER SAFETY REPORT CARD

- ✓ Used to assess water safety at a single site on a body of water, such as a bathing beach or boating launch.

COMMUNITY OPEN WATER SAFETY REPORT CARD

- ✓ Used to assess water safety within a community, such as a town, city, or county.

Indicators of Open Water Safety

DESIGNATED SWIM AREA: A designated swim area is marked by rope or other marker and considered a safe area to swim.

SITE CLOSURE: A site closure occurs when the “owner” of the site (e.g. parks) closes the site to protect visitors from hazardous water conditions (e.g. water contamination after a storm or high water in the spring) and/or closes an area of the site (e.g. cliff) to protect visitors.

SAFETY SIGNAGE: Safety signs inform visitors about the presence/absence of lifeguards, allowed/prohibited water activities, and other safety information.

LIFEGUARDS: Lifeguards are present.

ENFORCEMENT: Marine patrol have zero tolerance policies for child life jacket law violations and boating under the influence (BUI) laws.

RESCUE EQUIPMENT: Rescue equipment, such as a throwable rescue rope or landline telephone, is available in case of emergency.

Indicators of Open Water Safety

LIFE JACKET: Life jackets are allowed at open water sites and/or laws require life jacket use beyond the state law (mandatory life jacket use for kids 12 and under while on boats 19' or less while underway).

LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAMS: Life jacket loaner program is available, well-maintained, well-stocked, and includes easy-to-read instructions.

SURVEILLANCE: Local child death review team reviews drownings.

SWIMMING SKILLS AND WATER SAFETY EDUCATION: Swimming skills and water safety education are provided at a pool, school, beach, or other location(s) within a community. Local policies require swim lessons for children (e.g. for high school graduation).

PHYSICAL OPEN WATER BARRIERS: Public water sites, such as irrigation ditches and 208 swales, are fenced to prevent access.

PARTNERSHIPS: Coalition or network of people/organizations work together on open water drowning prevention.

Instructions: Open Water Safety Report Card

1. Select at least two popular recreation sites on a body of water/bodies of water. Complete one report card per site. Have at least two people complete the report card together.
2. Take a form to each selected site. If you need permission to assess the site, obtain permission before you go. If some sites are concerned about the assessment, reassure them the report card is a pilot test to improve water recreation safety.
3. Fill out the report card by marking yes or no for each item. Take notes as needed. Example of notes include "no swimming" sign is hidden by tree, or visitors rarely return life jackets to the life jacket loaner station.
4. Take a moment to reflect on and write down the successes and challenges to water safety at the site.
5. Identify and write down immediate, short-term, and long-term actions to improve water safety at the site.
6. Use the information gathered and actions identified to plan your local-level policy change, state-level policy change, and presentation to policy makers.
7. Make copies of the completed form as needed.
8. Return the completed assessments to your Safe Kids Coordinator.

Example

	Yes	No	Notes
Designated Swim Area (Bathing Beach Only)			
Marked by rope or other marker	X		
Clear, visible maximum depth marker		X	
Depth marker provided in shallow swimming area		X	
Float line separates shallow from deep swimming area	X		
Clear of rocks, weeds, lily pads, or other potential hazards	X		
Beach is glass free	X		
Other:			

Instructions: Community Open Water Safety Report Card

1. Identify organizations and individuals that can help you fill out the report card. You may need to obtain information from multiple sources (e.g. phone calls, visits to open water sites, internet research).
2. Define the community (e.g. neighborhood, district, county, town, or city).
3. Fill out the report card by marking yes or no for each item. Where applicable, write down the number of sites that have the "item" in the community (e.g. lifeguards) and write the number of sites that need the "item" in the community. Take notes as needed.
4. Take a moment to reflect on and write down the successes and challenges to water safety in this community.
5. Identify and write down immediate, short-term, and long-term actions to improve water safety in this community.
6. Use the information gathered and actions identified to plan your local-level policy change, state-level policy change, and presentation to policy makers.
7. Make copies of the completed form as needed.
8. Return the completed assessment to your Safe Kids Coordinator.

Example

	Y	N	# of Sites in Community	# of Sites Needed in Community	
Lifeguards					
Indoor public pools with lifeguards	X		2	0	
Outdoor public pools with lifeguards		X	0	0	
Public beaches with lifeguards	X		3	6	
Other policy:					

BREAK



Statewide Advocacy for Change

- **Policy can move from local to county to statewide and visa versa.**
- **Some issues occur statewide.**
 - Examples: BUI & child PFD wearing in boats
- **Some issues can be both state and local.**
 - PFD wearing on particular bodies of water
 - Lifeguards at city, county or state parks
- **Some issues can be local.**
 - Examples: PFD loan boards & lifeguard locations and hours

Statewide Advocacy for Change

At the local level, you may be able to:

- Document a needed policy change.
- Present issues and talk with your state legislator; ask them to take issue to statewide effort.
- Serve as an educational resource-address the pros & cons, potential lives and dollars saved, how the community will be safer.
- Keep it focused, rational, balanced, and as positive as possible.
- Be ready for questions.

Example: PFD Law, 1999

- **State Parks tried to pass a law but it needed to be done through local level advocacy.**
- **Had to make concessions (up to 12 years in boats 19 feet in length and under).**
- **Rationale that kids cannot necessarily make the safety choice for themselves.**
- **Had support from parents who said a law gives them more bargaining strength with their children.**

Example: PFD Law, 1999

- **What made the difference** - Several legislators, both Republican and Democrat, were willing to advocate for the law-all the way to the last day of the session.
- **Many WA legislators value independence** - words are powerful, so we need to alter the perception that safety and independence are always at odds.



Presenting Report Card Findings and
Recommendations to Policymakers

Where to present

- **It depends.... on the jurisdiction:**
 - City Council or City Parks Board
 - County Council or County Parks Board
 - Homeowners Association or owner/operator if it is private water access
 - State Park in your county
 - What other jurisdictions are in your area?

Getting on the Agenda

- **If you know someone on the board or council, tell them your issue, and ask for an invitation to present.**
- **Timing is important – get on agenda when there are no or fewer hot topics.**
- **Be VERY prepared and have answers to possible questions about why you want on the agenda.**
- **Spring is a good time to talk about water safety.**

Practical Tips

- **Be prepared by practicing ahead of time.**
- **Be punctual and polite; avoid saying ah and um.**
- **Give good quality information, data, and real stories.**
- **Be consistent and concise with your messages.**
- **Be ready to give pros and cons of the proposal and how to mitigate the cons.**
- **Have a one page summary handout and get it to them beforehand, if possible.**
- **Have local area examples.**

Practical Tips Continued

- **Expect some people to disagree with you.**
- **Be polite and repeat your position and give another example.**
- **Consider having an example from Oregon or Idaho as a comparison.**



Presenting Report Card Findings and Recommendations to Policymakers

What You Want Them To Know

- **The Report Card is an assessment of water safety issues in “our” community.**
- **If it shows work is needed, have some options for making things better.**
- **Options should show costs, timelines, and benefits.**
- **If it shows things are great, remind them of what needs to stay in place to keep it as safe as possible.**
- **A bottom line can be: we want this to be a place where all people can enjoy water recreation as safely as possible.**

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Next Steps:
Discussion with Safe Kids Coordinator

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Training Evaluation
Thank you for your time!

Contact Us

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Acknowledgment

This project was supported by grant #
1U17CE001778-01 from the Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the
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