International Open Water Drowning Prevention Guidelines

Consensus based guidelines to prevent open water recreation drowning

May 2010
Background

Many people drown while recreating at open water settings (lakes, rivers, oceans)
Drowning is a major cause of injury death for all ages. According to the WHO Global Burden of Disease estimates, 388 000 people died in 2004 as a result of drowning around the world, of whom 45% were under the age of 20 years.¹

Global data show that approximately 28% of all unintentional injury deaths among children are due to drowning.²

The drowning rate in low-income and middle-income countries is six times higher than in high-income countries (with rates of 7.8 per 100 000 and 1.2 per 100 000 respectively).¹

The majority of drownings occur in open water.

Background

- Organizations around the world provide different drowning messages.
- An international task force developed guidelines for families and individuals recreating at any open water site.
The 18 Member International Task Force

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8 Guidelines to *Keep Yourself Safe*

1. Learn swimming and water safety survival skills.
2. Always swim with others.
3. Obey all safety signs and warning flags.
4. Never go in the water after drinking alcohol.
5. Know how and when to use a life jacket.
6. Swim in areas with lifeguards.
7. Know the water and weather conditions before getting in the water.
8. Always enter shallow and unknown water feet first.
Keep Yourself Safe

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8 Guidelines to *Keep Others Safe*

1. Help and encourage others, especially children, to learn swimming and water safety survival skills.
2. Swim in areas with lifeguards.
4. Always provide close and constant attention to children you are supervising in or near water.
5. Know how and when to use lifejackets, especially with children and weak swimmers.
6. Learn first aid and CPR.
7. Learn safe ways of rescuing others without putting yourself in danger.
8. Obey all safety signs and warning flags.
Keep Others Safe

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Photo credit: Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB)
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Keep Others Safe

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7. Learn safe ways of rescuing others without putting yourself in danger.
Keep Others Safe

8. Obey all safety signs and warning flags.
Thanks!

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