

CDOP HOT TOPIC: OPEN WATER SAFETY

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Summer Water Safety

On a hot day, it might seem like a great idea to cool down in open water. Water may look safe, but it can be hazardous. There are too many risks that you can't see hidden below the surface.

Unattended rivers, lakes & reservoirs can seem like exciting places to explore, but they can be unsuitable or unsafe for swimming, and full of dangers. The remoteness of some of these places can also hamper and delay rescue attempts. The dangers of water can include:

- Very cold temperatures
- Hidden currents
- Water can often be deep—it is difficult to estimate depth.
- It can be difficult to get out (especially steep, slimy banks)
- There are no lifeguards on duty.
- There may be hidden debris or underwater hazards which can cause injury, including weeds which can entangle people underwater.

Top tips for staying safe around water

- Take notice of safety information, warning signs & flags.
- Do not jump/dive into rivers. Quick entry into cold water can cause your body to go into shock. It is also difficult to judge the depth and there can be hidden dangers.
- Be aware of strong currents and don't go into water near locks, weirs, sluices or bridges, as these structures can be linked with strong currents.
- The water in rivers/lakes can be colder than you expect at any time of the year. Cold water will affect your ability to swim, look after yourself, or rescue others. It's a key reason why people drown.
- Get trained in lifesaving & resuscitation techniques. Know what to do in an emergency.
- Floating devices can easily be carried into deep water and may not keep you afloat.
- Consuming alcohol or substances (drugs) will impair your ability & judgement around water.

Parents/Carers can help keep children in their care safe by:

- Teaching them to swim.
- Warning them not to go into the water alone, or unsupervised.
- Ensuring that they know where the children are and what they are doing
- Supervising them closely when near any open water.

More than 50 children a year in the UK die from drowning.



Drowning is among the leading causes of accidental death.

It can occur very quickly, even in shallow water.

It is often young people who get into trouble whilst swimming in open water. Cold waters, strong currents and other hazards increases the risk of accidental death by drowning.

Under-estimating the dangers of water can have tragic consequences.

USEFUL LINKS/RESOURCES:

[Canal & River Trust Summer Water Safety](#)

[Safety on our waterways](#)

[Canal & River Trust Learning Bundle](#)

[Water Safety Leaflet](#)

[Child Bereavement UK Support](#)

[Gov - Stay safe around rivers](#)

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