



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

The Lifeguarding Experts
Les experts en surveillance aquatique

2024 Seasonal Drowning Prevention Messages

Messages are not specific to a month. Branches can select messages depending on regional needs as conditions/seasons vary across the country.

1. Bathtub Safety

- Make sure children are always supervised within arm's reach in the bathtub.
- Drowning is fast and silent. If you are on your phone, you will not see or hear your child drowning. Watch your child, not your phone!
- Use adhesive stickers in the tub to prevent falls for children and adults.



2. Spring Thaw

- Spring thaw is a dangerous time because melting snow and rain makes river water rise and run fast.
- Help children to understand the potential dangers related to spring thaw.
- Check your local weather reports and sign-up for flood alerts to avoid being swept away in unexpected conditions.

3. Cold Water Safety

- People who fall into cold water usually drown before hypothermia sets in. Remember the numbers 1-10-1: 1 minute to control your breathing; 10 minutes to exit the water using self-rescue steps; 1 hour before hypothermia sets in.
- Try to remain calm and aware of the environment around you, call for help or make other noise to make your presence known.
- If you want to help someone in trouble in cold water, anchor yourself to a secure point and then reach to the person using an aid such as a paddle, pole, or rope.
- Wear a lifejacket when doing activities around cold water! It can keep you afloat, help you stay warm, and are easy to spot.



4. Boating Safety

- **Wear Your Lifejacket:** Over 80% of Canadians who drown while boating were not wearing their lifejacket or not wearing it properly¹.
- **Be Prepared:** Make sure that your boat has the required safety equipment, the weather is suitable for the voyage, you have sufficient fuel, and you have filed a trip plan. At a minimum, let someone know where you are going and when you are returning. Know how to use VHF and what channel you need to call for help in your area.
- **Boat Sober:** The use of intoxicants, whether it is alcohol, cannabis, or prescription drugs, affects decision-making and can lead to boating accidents. Stay sober – stay safe!
- **Take a Boating Course:** If you are operating a powered recreational vessel, you need to have your Pleasure Craft Operator (PCO) Card or some other proof of competency.



5. Backyard Pool Safety

- 92% of children drowned when supervision was absent or distracted¹.
- Assign a dedicated supervisor/parent lifeguard to remain within arm's reach of children - rotate the adults so that there will always be a responsible adult present. On Guard Cards are a handy tool with useful tips on how to stay safe!
https://www.lifesavingsociety.com/media/392752/onguardcard_en.pdf
- Install separate child-resistant locks well above a child's reach with accompanying audible alarms on all doors leading to the pool.
- Never rely on a single measure to keep young children from getting into the pool area. Set up at least two additional barriers- 2 fences or a fence and an alarm system.



¹[The National Drowning Report, 2020 Edition](#)

6. Learn to Swim



- Learning to swim is an important life skill, especially in Canada since we have many coastal communities and an abundance of lakes and rivers.
- Learning to swim requires instruction, go to your local pool to register for lessons.
- At a minimum, Canadians should be able to achieve the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive standard in order to survive an unexpected fall into the water:
 - roll into deep water
 - tread water for 1 minute
 - swim 50 meters with any stroke.



7. CPR

- If you are experiencing chest pain and shortness of breath, call 9-1-1.
- Calling EMS and pushing hard and fast on the centre of the chest can make a difference. The first few minutes are most critical for a better recovery.
- Show your heart some love by getting plenty of exercise such as swimming or by walking 10,000 steps/day - this is key in the fight against sedentary behavior as provided by the WHO.
- You can make a difference – take a Lifesaving Society CPR course today!



8. Ice Safety

- No ice is without some risk...minimize your risk!
- New, clear, hard ice is the only kind of ice recommended for travel.
- Avoid:
 - Areas of slush on the ice
 - Open holes or open water
 - Ice on or near moving water i.e., rivers, currents
 - Ice that has thawed and refrozen
 - Pressure ridges
 - Travelling on ice at night
- Before you leave shore inform someone of your destination and expected time of return.
- If you go out on the ice, always be prepared to go through it and into cold water! Wear a lifejacket or float coat while doing on-ice activities such as ice fishing.
- If someone is in trouble on the ice, or has fallen through, call for help, anchor yourself to a point on shore, and use an aid to reach out to the person in distress.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Sudden temperature changes can cause ice to crack or split into layers. Stay off unknown ice and avoid ice when possible.



DID YOU KNOW ?

Snow acts like a blanket and prevents ice from hardening. Never go on the ice alone, a buddy can rescue you or go for help if you break through the ice.



DID YOU KNOW ?

Currents or wind action can shift entire ice sheets and create pressure ridges or weak points. Always evaluate ice quality and type before going out on the ice.



RECOMMENDED MINIMUM ICE THICKNESS

For safe ice fishing

		
Ice fishing	Ice fishing hut <small>For capacity not exceeding 9.3 m³ (3000 ft³) and 2,182 kg (4,807 lb)</small>	Middle weight truck
10 CM (4")	30 CM (12")	30-38 CM (12-15")



¹[The National Drowning Report, 2020 Edition](#)