



Celebrating International Water Safety Day in the Classroom and Beyond

Developed by Diversity in Aquatics and the American Red Cross

Thank you for celebrating International Water Safety Day on May 15! Many organizations around the globe are joining this effort to help raise awareness of the worldwide pandemic of drowning and to educate children and adults in a dryland setting about the basics of how to safe in and around the water. We can make a difference even without a body of water.

This resource guide provides ideas, guidance and tools to help implement International Water Safety Days at local, state and national level. Here is a general outline of action steps for participation:

1. Contact a decision maker in your organization for approval of the activities. For school districts, this may be the superintendent, principal or health and physical education coordinator. A sample letter is provided.
2. Register your intent to host an event at internationalwatersafetyday.org/get-involved/. You will estimate the number of people you expect to reach and make a request for stickers that can distributed to participants. The stickers are available on a first come/first served basis, so register early!
3. Designate a point of contact for your group or school system to help with communications and to distribute flyers and stickers to participating schools.
4. Make a plan for your organization's level of involvement and type of activities.
5. Access the International Water Safety resources at internationalwatersafetyday.org/get-involved/.
6. Send a “KIT”—Keep in Touch—message to the community about your group’s participation in International Water Safety Day that includes:
 - Drowning facts and statistics about unintentional drowning.
 - Why your organization is participating.
 - Goals and objectives and of the program.
7. Distribute the International Water Safety Day lesson plan and other resources to throughout your group, your school leaders and Health/Physical Education Departments.
8. Issue a press release to the local media about your participation in this global initiative and your local efforts to increase water safety education.
9. Record participation numbers on the International Water Safety Day. Your results help tell the story of our combined impact across the nation and the globe.

Resources:

- Resource 1: Drowning Facts and Sources
- Resource 2: Sample Letters
 - International
 - School Districts (focused on United States statistics, but can be customized for use other countries)
 - Community Groups (focused on United States statistics, but can be customized for use other countries)
- Resource 3: International Water Safety Day Announcement Script
- Resource 4: International Water Safety Day Classroom Lesson Plan
- Resource 5: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day Handout (available in digital format)
- Resource 6: The *Pool Safely* Pledge (available in digital formats)
- Resource 7: Additional Ideas for International Water Safety Day

Resource 1: Drowning Facts and Sources

Drowning Facts According to the World Health Organization

- Every hour, every day, more than 40 people lose their lives to drowning.
- 372,000 people drown each year, with those under 5 years old at greatest risk.
- Globally, over half of all drowning deaths are under 25 years old.
- Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury death, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths.

Source: For more information and facts, visit <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs347/en/>

Drowning Facts According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning.
- Of these, two are children aged 14 or younger.
- Drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury death in the United States.
- **Males:** Nearly 80% of people who die from drowning are male.
- **Children:** Children ages 1 to 4 years old have the highest drowning rates. In 2014, among children 1 to 4 years old who died from an unintentional injury, one-third died from drowning. Among children ages 1 to 4, most drowning's occur in home swimming pools. Drowning is responsible for more deaths among children 1-4 than any other cause except congenital anomalies (birth defects). Among those 1-14, fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death behind motor vehicle crashes.
- **Minorities:** Between 1999-2010, the fatal unintentional drowning rate for African Americans was significantly higher than that of whites across all ages. The disparity is widest among children 5-18 years old. The disparity is most pronounced in swimming pools; African American children 5-19 drown in swimming pools at rates 5.5 times higher than those of whites. This disparity is greatest among those 11-12 years where African Americans drown in swimming pools at rates 10 times those of whites.
- Factors such as access to a swimming pool, lack of broad based water safety education, the desire or lack of desire to learn how to swim, and choosing water-related recreational activities may contribute to the racial differences in drowning rates. Available rates are based on population, not on participation. If rates could be determined by actual participation in water-related activities, the disparity in minorities' drowning rates compared to whites would be much greater.

Source: For more information specific to the United States, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>



Resource 2: Sample Letters

Sample language for letters to invite others to participate in your International Water Safety Day activities are provided on internationalwatersafetyday.org/get-involved/. These are available in Word format in order for you to customize with your organization's logos and branding, if desired, and with information and statistics for your country and/or community.

- International
- School Districts (focused on United States statistics, but can be customized for use other countries)
- Community Groups (focused on United States statistics, but can be customized for use other countries)



Resource 3: International Water Safety Day Announcement Script

Today is International Water Safety Day. Did you know that drowning is a leading cause of accidental death for children? We're shining a spotlight on this day so you know the basics for keeping yourself, your family and friends safe in and around the water every day.

It all begins with **learning to swim!** Swim lessons teach safety and swimming skills you need to enjoy the water safely.

But it's not just about knowing how to swim. You need to be smart, too. Here are some ways to do that:

- **Swim as a pair near a lifeguard's chair.** Buddy up. Never swim alone. Only swim in places that are protected by lifeguards—or, if at a home pool, only swim when an adult is actively supervising the water.
- **Look before you leap.** Check the water and weather conditions to be sure that it's a safe place and time to swim. And always enter feet first unless the area is intended for diving.
- **Follow the rules.** They exist to keep you safe. Always listen to the lifeguards.
- **Life jackets save lives, so don't just pack it, wear your jacket.** Everyone should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat, and anyone who needs a bit more support should wear one when going into the water.
- **Think, so you don't sink.** Know what to do if you get in trouble in the water. The more skills you have, the better you'll be able to deal with scary situations.
- **And if someone around you gets in trouble, reach or throw, don't go!** Use reaching or throwing equipment to help a struggling person get to safety. Only trained lifeguards should enter the water to help someone in trouble, and even then, the lifeguard is going in with rescue equipment.

Knowing how to swim, making smart choices around the water and knowing what to do if something goes wrong can make a difference between life and death. Get started by taking the *Pool Safely* Pledge at poosafely.gov/pledge. On this International Water Safety Day and throughout the rest of the year, do your part, be water smart!





Resource 4: International Water Safety Day Classroom Lesson Plan

Purpose:

To promote water safety and drowning prevention education as well as equip youth with tools to understand how to act in emergency and rescue situations in aquatic environments

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify actions they can take to help keep them safe in water activities at pools, waterparks and oceans, lakes and rivers.
- Explain how following safety rules can prevent accidents in and around water.
- Describe the features of a safe swimming area.
- Describe hazards that make an aquatic area dangerous.
- Explain water safety concepts to others.

Teacher Resources:

- Standards and Performance Indicators
- International Water Safety Day Announcement Script
- Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day Handout (available in digital format)
- International Water Safety Day Stickers
- *Pool Safely* Pledge handouts (also available in digital format)
- Access to Internet for Review of the Water Safety Rules and the *Pool Safely* Pledge

Class Time:

15 minutes

Standards and Performance Indicators:

The Water Safety Education Lesson Plans meet several levels of the CDC National Health Education Standards. As indicated on the website, the NHES are written expectations for what students should know and be able to do by grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 to promote personal, family, and community health. The standards provide a framework for curriculum development and selection, instruction, and student assessment in health education (NHES, 2016).

[Standard 1](#) Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

[Standard 2](#) Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

[Standard 3](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.



- [Standard 4](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

- [Standard 5](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

- [Standard 6](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

- [Standard 7](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

- [Standard 8](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Lesson Activities:

1. Distribute the "Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day" handout to students.

2. Relay the following key points:
 - **Today is International Water Safety Day.**
 - **Did you know that drowning is a leading cause of accidental death for children? We're shining a spotlight on this day so you know the basics for keeping yourself, your family and friends safe in and around the water every day.**
 - **Learning to swim is a great way to begin! Swim lessons teach safety and swimming skills you need to enjoy the water safely.**

3. Ask students: **Where do you like to go or what you like to do that involves being on or around the water?**

Answer: Responses may include the following:

- *Home pools*
- *Spas and hot tubs*
- *Pool parties*
- *Waterparks*
- *Lakes and rivers*
- *Oceans*
- *Diving*
- *Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking/Rafting/Tubing*

4. Relay the following key points:
 - **Enjoying the water safely is not just about knowing how to swim. You need to be smart, too.**
 - **We're going to talk about ways that you can do that.**

5. Read each the safety rule, which is in bold face font. After each rule, facilitate a brief discussion about the rule that draws out the main points in the supporting information.
- **Swim as a pair near a lifeguard’s chair.**
 - Buddy up. Never swim alone.
 - Only swim in places that are protected by lifeguards—or, if at a home pool, only swim when an adult is actively supervising the water.
 - **Look before you leap.**
 - Check the water and weather conditions to be sure that it’s a safe place and time to swim.
 - Always enter feet first unless the area is intended for diving.
 - **Follow the rules.**
 - They exist to keep you safe.
 - Always listen to the lifeguards.
 - **Life jackets save lives, so don’t just pack it, wear your jacket.**
 - Everyone should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat.
 - Anyone who needs a bit more support should wear one when going into the water.
 - **Think, so you don't sink.**
 - Know what to do if you get in trouble in the water.
 - The more skills you have, the better you’ll be able to deal with scary situations.
 - **If someone around you gets in trouble, reach or throw, don’t go!**
 - Use reaching or throwing equipment to help a struggling person get to safety.
 - Only trained lifeguards should enter the water to help someone in trouble, and even then, the lifeguard is going in with rescue equipment.

6. Read each scenario below to students. After each scenario, have students consider the consequences and respond by telling what they think might happen. Then, discuss how the accidents could have been prevented by following the rules.

Scenario 1

Jennifer and Tamika have just come out of the pool locker room and decide to race to the edge of the pool. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- They could fall and hurt themselves.
- They could fall and hurt others who are in the way.

Scenario 2

Ian and Justin are playing tag in the water. Ian climbs out and runs to the diving board. Justin follows quickly and jumps in to tag Ian. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- Justin could land on Ian and they could both be hurt.
- Others swimming in the general area could be hurt.
- Both boys could slip and fall while running to the diving board.

Scenario 3

Jason and some of his friends are taking turns jumping in the water from the side of the pool. Jason gets tired of waiting for his turn so he pushes a friend into the water. The friend is surprised and swallows some water. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *His friend could start coughing.*
- *His friend may go back under and swallow more water.*

Scenario 4

Maria and her little brother, José, are getting ready to get into the water. José puts on his arm floats. Maria takes him into water over his head. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *If José cannot swim well, he could be in a situation that is beyond his ability.*
- *If José cannot swim well, the arm floats could slip off or could lose air and José could sink.*

Scenario 5

Colin and Shelley are walking along a river, when Shelley decides that she wants to go for a swim. She jumps into the river. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but should include the following:

She could get caught in the current and carried away.

The current could carry her toward hazards such as a strainer, dam or hydraulic.

7. Optional Summary and Evaluation Exit Ticket: Have students log on to the Kahoot! site to participate in an interactive review of the rules for water safety ([Link](#)).
8. Distribute a *Pool Safely* Pledge and an International Water Safety Day sticker to each student. Have students complete the pledge. Collect the completed pledges.
 - Optional variation with school/parent approval: Have students' log-in to computers. Have them go to the following site: <https://www.poolsafely.gov/pledge/> and take the Pledge.
9. Relay the following key points to wrap up the lesson:
 - **Knowing how to swim, making smart choices around the water and knowing what to do if something goes wrong can make a difference between life and death.**
 - **On this International Water Safety Day and throughout the rest of the year, do your part, be water smart!**
 - **Be sure to share what you have learned today with your family and friends to help them be water smart, too.**

Resource 5: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day Handout

Download the handout at internationalwatersafetyday.org/get-involved/ and distribute to participants.

Do Your Part, Be Water Smart!

Celebrating



Did you know that drowning is a leading cause of accidental death for children? Learn the basics for keeping yourself, your family and friends safe in and around the water every day.

- It all begins with **learning to swim!** Swim lessons teach safety and swimming skills you need to enjoy the water safely. Can't swim? Take Red Cross swim lessons!
- **Swim as a pair near a lifeguard's chair.** Buddy up. Never swim alone. Only swim in places that are protected by lifeguards—or, if at a home pool, only swim when an adult is supervising.
- **Look before you leap.** Check the water and weather conditions to be sure that it's a safe place and time to swim. And always enter feet first unless the area is intended for diving.
- **Follow the rules.** They exist to keep you safe. Always listen to the lifeguards.
- **Life jackets save lives, so don't just pack it, wear your jacket.** Everyone should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat, and anyone who needs a bit more support should wear one when going into the water.
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- **Reach or throw, don't go!** Use reaching or throwing equipment to help a person who is struggling in the water get to safety. Only trained lifeguards should enter the water to help someone in trouble, and even then, the lifeguard is going in with rescue equipment.

Knowing how to swim, making smart choices around the water and knowing what to do if something goes wrong can mean the difference between life and death.

Begin by Learning to Swim!

Get started by taking the *Pool Safely Pledge* at poolsafely.gov/pledge.

For more information, visit International Water Safety Day at internationalwatersafetyday.org and the American Red Cross at redcross.org/watersafety.



Swim

Download the Red Cross Swim App to learn more about water safety through fun videos, test how "water smart" you are, and even track your progress as you learn to swim. Text SWIM to 90999 or search the iTunes app store or Google Play for American Red Cross.



American Red Cross



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Resource 6: The Pool Safely Pledge

- Once again this year, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) *Pool Safely* campaign is asking every adult and child in America to sign the *Pool Safely* Pledge.
- The Pledge, designed for both kids and adults, is a call to action that people to commit to take specific steps for being safer in and around the water:
 - Kids will pledge to never go in the water without an adult nearby.
 - Adults will pledge to always watch kids in the water, to learn CPR and to ensure their pools have proper fencing and gates.
 - Visit PoolSafely.gov/pledge to sign the pledge online and learn more.
- Since its launch in 2014, the campaign has achieved more than 50,000 Pledges nationwide.
 - As of March 2017, the total Pledge count is 50,700.

Pool Safely Pledge for Children



[Download](#)

Pool Safely Pledge for Adults



[Download](#)

Consolidated Signature Sheet



[Download](#)

Download hard copy Pledge cards and distribute as appropriate to children and adults. After completion, the person taking the pledge should cut off and keep the top portion. Collect the bottom section and send them to:

Widmeyer—Pool Safely
Attn: Christina Saull
1129 20th Street, NW #200
Washington, DC 20036

You may also download the consolidated signature sheet for events serving middle-school aged youth and adults. Please scan and email completed signature sheets to:

Christina.Saull@finnpartners.com
Re: Pool Safely Pledges

Children and adults have the option to take the Pledge online:
poolsafely.gov/pledge

Resource 7: Additional Ideas for International Water Safety Day

International Water Safety Day can be celebrated wherever groups of people are brought together—and these important messages are not just for children. Here are some examples of other organizations who are participating and their plans for May 15:

- A consortium of police, fire and emergency medical services personnel are hosting a Community Risk Reduction Event on Water Safety at a major international airport.
- Commemorating International Water Safety Day at the launch of a national lifesaving organization.
- A fitness center chain that has pools will conduct swimming safety classes both land and in-water. They will also post water safety signage on their in-house TVs and on social media outlets.
- The student recreation and wellness center at a state college will host a Safety Day. The main focus is water safety along with other safety topics that will include safety learning sessions, games and activities.
- International Water Safety Day will be celebrated at the season opening of pools and other aquatic facilities.
- Entire school districts are taking water safety messages to their full student body through reading the announcement at all schools and distributing stickers to all students.

In addition to conducting a classroom lesson, the following suggestions are idea starters to help increase knowledge about water safety and drowning prevention at your school:

- Engage your local school Student Government Association (SGA) by having them read the International Water Safety Day Announcement script or create their own water safety PSA on May 15.
- Have a door decorating or poster contest judged by local businesses, organizations and safety professionals.
- Wear blue, life jackets or aquatic gear for water safety “spirit day” at the school and share on the district or school website and social media outlets using designated hashtag **#iwsd**.
- Have an exploration day in the cafeteria with aquatic professionals at stations promoting water safety education and other aquatic related opportunities.
- Ask a American Red Cross instructor or lifeguard from a local aquatics facility to be a guest speaker.
- Invite your local media outlets to come to your school and showcase your International Water Safety Day activities.
- Have your class create an app, YouTube video or marketing campaign for the community promoting water safety.
- Continue the water safety lessons using the American Red Cross Longfellow's WHALE Tales program (available at redcross.org/teachwatersafety).