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EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

FACT SHEET No.14

Water Safety on Holidays



Q. Why is water safety on holidays important?

A. While holidaying, you may experience aquatic environments you are unfamiliar with or that have changed since your last visit. To enjoy these locations safely, it is important to know the safety aspects that apply to different aquatic environments.

Q. What should I do if I'm holidaying in an unfamiliar aquatic location?

A. Conditions can change all the time, and a spot that was safe to swim at in the morning, may have developed a strong current by the afternoon. Before you enter any water body, spend time observing it, looking for any rips or currents. Ask a local about the waterway. Never dive in, always enter the water slowly, feet first.

Q. What steps can I take to keep my family safe when holidaying near the water?

A. Discuss with your children that they are not to enter the water without a parent present. Explain that even though they may be competent swimmers at home, the conditions can change dramatically in other environments and they need to be aware of this. Be aware of objects in the water, from rocks to watercraft. Obey any signs to stay in a designated area. Make sure you do the right thing as children will model their behaviour on you. Never swim alone and ensure children are actively supervised – Keep Watch and keep them within arms' reach.

Q. What about if I'm visiting a water park?

A. In exactly the same way as at a public pool, lifeguards at water parks are on hand to ensure that all patrons can enjoy their time at the facility. This does not mean they are responsible for babysitting young children. Parents must continue to actively supervise children within arms' reach at these venues. Please see Fact Sheet No. 11 – Public Pool Safety for more information.

Q. What dangers exist at inland waterways?

A. Many families enjoy holidays at locations near rivers, lakes and dams. It is important to remember that at these locations water conditions can change hourly. These locations can also present dangers with crumbling or slippery banks, shifting floors, submerged objects, watercraft and cold water. Many locations such as rivers, lakes and dams do not have lifeguards on duty.

Real Life Story - Family Holiday Drowning

Two people have drowned whilst on a family holiday. The father and son drowned after being caught in strong currents in a river near their campsite. Unable to make it to safety against the currents, they disappeared below the surface. Locals tried to help but were unable to resuscitate the pair. After the incident locals described the river as unpredictable.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**

Water Safety on Holidays Checklist:

- Checked conditions with a resident local to the area before entering
- Swam in patrolled areas, where possible
- Condition of all equipment checked before use
- Observed for changing weather conditions
- Observed conditions of water before entering
- Watched out for other people or watercraft when in the water
- Ensured children are actively supervised (within arms' reach) at all times
- Refrained from drinking alcohol if planned to undertake aquatic activity

MAKE SURE YOU DO THE RIGHT THING AS CHILDREN WILL MODEL THEIR BEHAVIOUR ON YOU

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