



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## **BC DROWNINGS TAKE A TRAGIC TURN**

**JULY 18, 2018**

In the middle of their National Drowning Prevention Week, the Lifesaving Society is reminding British Columbians to be prepared for the worst case scenario when heading for the water.

Recent water-related tragedies highlight the need for preparation and caution when enjoying BC's waterways in the hot summer weather. To date, the Lifesaving Society reports 29 drownings this year compared to 28 at the same time last year.

However, the difference this year is that 4 of those drowning victims (compared to none last year) were would-be rescuers who got into trouble themselves while trying to save another person's life.

Today, the Lifesaving Society will be training over 500 children and youth in the Swim to Survive program at New Brighton pool in Vancouver. Between 10 am and 3 pm, those aged 7 to 18 will learn 3 basic skills that will help them survive an unexpected fall into water. In collaboration with the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Lifeguard Association, the Lifesaving Society is emphasizing their belief that "All Children Should Learn to Swim to Survive." (Click [here](#) to register)

According to Dale Miller, Society Executive Director, "One of the skills taught today will be self-rescue and stressing the importance of low-risk methods to prevent additional victims when trying to rescue someone."

The Lifesaving Society's 2018 BC Drowning Report shows that although the scenarios and locations change each year, trends seen over the past five years include:

### **A Profile of BC Drowning Victims:**

**Who** - 78% of drowning victims are male, 28% are between 20 and 34 years of age

**Where** - 37% in lakes, 28% in rivers and creeks, 16% in ocean waters, 4% in backyard pools

**Why** - Most never intended to enter the water and were not wearing a lifejacket or PFD

**When** - Most common in summer months and in the late afternoon (fatigue, alcohol?)

**How** - 35% were boating, 21% were swimming, 7% were diving or jumping into the water

Virtually all of the drownings seen in BC each year are preventable. To keep yourself and loved ones safe this summer, the Lifesaving Society recommends:

- Wear an approved lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD) when boating or around the water
- Always closely supervise young children near water - if you're not within arm's reach, you've gone too far
- Restrict access to backyard pools and ponds – fence them off on all four sides and use a self-closing gate and latch
- Learn to swim and learn lifesaving skills - contact your local pool

The Lifesaving Society provides programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. Each year, more than 1 million Canadians participate in the Society's programs.

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For further comment, contact Dale Miller as noted below or cell – 604.341.7475

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