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An estimated one million people drown every year. This global epidemic is particularly felt in the Maritimes, where 20 to 24 year-olds have an average yearly drowning rate of 2.3 per 100,000, according to the 2016 Maritimes Drowning Report.

To raise awareness of this rising epidemic, the Lifesaving Society launched National Drowning Prevention Week. Members of communities across Nova Scotia spread the importance of drowning prevention, and vow to adopt water-safe practices.

The 2017 National Drowning Prevention Week will take place from July 16 to 22. Due to our size, we are limited in our abilities to launch a province-wide campaign. We rely on the generous support from community organizations and members – such as you.

We would be thrilled if you and your organization were to join us in promoting water safety for this year's National Drowning Prevention Week. Attached is an outline of an information kit for this year's campaign. We ask that you take the time to review it, and consider bringing National Drowning Prevention Week to your community.

We would be thrilled to welcome you aboard.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to discussing this further.

All the best,

Robert McNutt  
President  
Lifesaving Society – Nova Scotia Branch

## Preface

This guide is a valuable tool for the planning and organization of National Drowning Prevention Week activities.

The Society designates the third week in July as National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) to focus community and media attention on the drowning problem and drowning prevention.

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2017 Edition

The Lifesaving Society – Canada’s lifeguarding experts – works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart public education, aquatic safety management, drowning research and lifesaving sport.

Annually, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society’s swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada’s National Lifeguards.

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### Lifesaving Society – Nova Scotia Branch



## The Drowning Problem

An estimated one million people drown every year. Population projections mean that the problem is going to get worse, especially in developing countries.

Counting victims does not save lives or reduce drowning – but understanding the magnitude of the problem and identifying the risk factors does allow lifesaving organizations to provide effective prevention actions to the highest risk populations, locations and activities.

## What is drowning?

Specifically, drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid.

## Quick Facts

### According to the 2016 Maritimes Drowning Report:

- The vast majority of drowning deaths in the Maritime Provinces continue to occur in natural bodies of water (92%).
- In 2009-2013, the highest proportion of water-related fatalities occurred in the ocean (41%), followed by flowing water such as rivers and streams (26%) and lakes (25%).
- Water-related fatalities more commonly occurred in urban (63%) than rural (37%) settings.
- Over two thirds (69%) of drowning deaths in the Maritimes occurred during the warmer months (May through September).
- Almost two thirds (64%) of water-related fatalities in the Maritimes occurred on the weekend (Friday, Saturday, or Sunday).
- Recreational activities (57%) continued to account for the greatest proportion of water-related fatalities in 2009-2013. The most common primary recreational activities were swimming (28%), fishing (17%), and powerboating (13%).
- Boating risk factors contributing to drowning incidents in the Maritimes: not wearing a PFD (80%); Boating in twilight or darkness (54%); Alcohol consumption (35%); Boating alone (31%).
- Swimming risk factors contributing to drowning incidents in the Maritimes: Alcohol consumption (63%); Victim unable to swim (35%); Swimming alone (27%).
- The vast majority of drowning victims continue to be men. In 2009-2013, the average water-related fatality rate was 2.8 per 100,000 for men, and 0.2 per 100,000 for women
- Consistent with national trends, the highest drowning rates by age in the Maritimes were found among young adults 20-24 years old

## **Main Messages to Emphasize for NDPW 2017**

- If you're not within arms' reach, you've gone too far. Always supervise children.
- Boat sober. Alcohol consumption is a factor in almost 40% of boating-related fatalities.
- Choose It. Use It. Always wear a Lifejacket or PFD.
- Lifejackets don't work if you don't wear them. Not wearing a Lifejacket or PFD was a factor in 82% of boating deaths.
- Approximately 500 Canadians die in preventable water-related incidents annually. Even one drowning is one too many.

## **National Drowning Prevention Week 2017**

This year's National Drowning Prevention Week will continue successful campaigns from last year, while incorporating new ideas. Our goal is to increase our presence in the province, reaching more communities than ever before.

One central component of this year's campaign will be our **Community Kits**.

Community Kits will be sent out to participating organizations in communities across the province.

### **Each kit contains:**

- National Drowning Prevention Week bookmarks
- Drowning information fact sheets
- Various educational materials
- Lifesaving Society posters
- Lifesaving Society tattoos
- "Be water smart. Always swim with a buddy" posters (see below)

We're asking our community organizations to distribute these kits to grade schools, and to display the kits in a public location, to help spread awareness of National Drowning Prevention Week and water safety.

### **About the "Be water smart. Always swim with a buddy" poster:**

- This poster aims to bring public awareness to the importance of water safety.
- People are encouraged to outline their handprint onto the poster, and write the name of a buddy who they will swim with this summer.
- The idea is to think about always swimming safely with a buddy, and staying in arms reach of another person.
- Photos of completed posters can be sent to [publicrelations.nsls@gmail.com](mailto:publicrelations.nsls@gmail.com). Received posters may be featured on our social media pages.

- See the following example:



### What you can do to help promote NDPW:

Share the items in your Community Kit with the members of your community.

- Encourage people to trace their hands on the Swim Safe poster and write who their summer 2017 swimming buddy will be.
- Check our online guide for activities at [www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca](http://www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca)
- Share photos and videos of drowning prevention activities from your community with our social media channels.
  - [www.facebook.com/NovaScotiaLifesavingSociety](http://www.facebook.com/NovaScotiaLifesavingSociety)
  - [www.twitter.com/NSLifesaving](http://www.twitter.com/NSLifesaving)
  - [www.instagram.com/nslifeguard](http://www.instagram.com/nslifeguard)
  - Use the hashtag #NDPW2017 (English) or SNPN2017 (French)

### We hope you'll join us!

We're gathering an incredible team of volunteers from across the province.

**If you and your organization are interested in joining the Nova Scotia National Drowning Prevention Week team, email our Public Relations Officer at: [publicrelations.nsls@gmail.com](mailto:publicrelations.nsls@gmail.com).**

**\*\*Please see the following page for a list of daily themes and suggested activities for each day\*\***

## Suggested Messages, Themes and Activities:

**\*\*Use the suggested daily hashtags and key messages on social media, and tag @NSLifeguard!\*\***

### THEME ONE

#### **Sunday, July 16: NDPW & the Drowning Problem – National**

Social Media Ideas:

- Take photos of your lifeguards and post them to social media with #NDPW2017 (English) or #SNPN2017 (French).

Key messages:

- The Lifesaving Society's NDPW takes place July 16-22, 2017.
- Almost 500 Canadians die in preventable water-related incidents annually. Even one drowning is one too many.
- National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) is the Lifesaving Society's annual drowning prevention awareness event.
- Drownings deaths occur most frequently in adults 20-34, but children under 5 are still at risk.
- Over 80% of drowning victims are male, especially those who are 20-34 years old.

### THEME TWO

#### **Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup>: National Drowning Prevention Week and the Drowning Problem on a Local level**

Social Media Ideas:

- Post a photo of your lifeguard team or pose with a manikin.
- Utilize the *Be Water Smart* handprint activity sheet provided with a group of school aged children while educating them about water safety and drowning prevention
- Post photos of items/skills that could help prevent drownings unique to your city.
- #ManikinMonday, #LocalDrowningPrevention & #NDPW2017 (English) or #SNPN2017 (French).

Key Messages:

- Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury deaths among Canadian children under 9 years of age.
- Stay within arm's reach! All children aged 6 and under should be within arm's reach of an adult when in the water at all times.
- "Unattended toddlers" are high risk because they are mobile, curious and require close and constant supervision by an adult.
- Children less than six years of age are the least capable of self-rescue of any age group. Most of these children were alone and playing near water when they fell in and drowned.

### **THEME THREE**

#### **Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>: Boating Safety**

##### Social Media Ideas:

- Post photos of people wearing PFDs and boat safety equipment with #BoatSafety & #NDPW2017 (English) or #SNPN2017 (French).

##### Key Messages:

- Boat sober - alcohol consumption is a factor in almost 40% of boating-related fatalities.
- Get carded! Get the Pleasure Craft Operator Card.

### **THEME FOUR**

#### **Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>: Be Water Smart**

##### Social Media Ideas:

- Post a video of lifeguards or swim instructors sharing the importance of being water smart and one tip of how people can be water smart this summer.
- Post videos of Bronze candidates, local lifeguards or general public trying lifesaving skills, or boomerang of a class/group of people doing CPR on manikins.
- #BeWaterSmart & #NDPW2017 (English) and #SNPN2017 (French)

##### Key Messages:

- Always swim with a buddy - 26% of drowning deaths happen when swimming alone.
- If you're not within arms' reach, you've gone too far! Always supervise children. Learn lifesaving skills.
- Take a Bronze medal, Lifesaving First Aid, or CPR course today.
- Know before you go! Check the weather before heading out on the water.
- Protect your neck. Go feet first into water the first time. Never dive into shallow water.
- Substance and swimming don't mix. Stay sober when in and around the water.

### **THEME FIVE**

#### **Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup>: Lifejacket Use**

##### Social Media Ideas:

- Video of how to properly wear and size a PFD on a range of different ages and sizes.
- Split screen photo of do and don't with PFDs; provide a checklist for ensuring your PFDs are in good shape.
- Boomerang of happy lifeguards/people in PFDs.
- #Lifejackets & #NDPW2017 (English) and #SNPN2017 (French)

Key Messages:

- Choose It. Use It. Always wear a Lifejacket or PFD.
- Lifejackets don't work if you don't wear them. Not wearing a Lifejacket or PFD was a factor in 82% of boating deaths.
- Even good swimmers need lifejackets.
- Lifejackets don't replace supervision by an adult.
- Lifejackets are like seatbelts. Buckle up when boating!

**THEME SIX**

**Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup>:** Learn to Swim to Survive

Social Media Ideas:

- Encourage people to try Swim to Survive.
- Video of people doing Swim to Survive.
- Video of the variations of the Swim to Survive skills.
- Photo of Bronze medals.
- Video/boomerang of Bronze skills.
- #SwimtoSurvive, #STSDay & #NDPW2017 (English) and #SNPN2017 (French)

Key messages:

- Swim to Survive! Can you swim at least 50 metres in the water?
- Swim to Survive! Can you tread water for at least 60 seconds?
- Swim to Survive! Can you orient yourself after an unexpected fall into water?
- Register yourself and your loved ones in swimming lessons. Swimming is a lifesaving skill.
- Take a Lifesaving Society Bronze course to learn important self-rescue and first aid skills.
- Learn how to rescue others from water emergencies in the Lifesaving Society's Bronze Medallion course.

**THEME SEVEN**

**Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Closure and Celebrations

Social Media Ideas:

- Photos and videos from the week.
- Photo/boomerang of lifeguards/public celebrating water safety.
- Touch on previous topics.
- Post key Water Smart® messages.
- Thank you messages.
- #NDPW2017 (English) and #SNPN2017 (French).

Key Messages:

- See "Be Water Smart®."
- Thank you for your #NDPW2017 support.
- Drowning prevention is a year-round effort. Always be safe in, on, and around water and ice.