

NEWS RELEASE

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Boating Safety Reminder

As the weather gets warmer

Summary

As the weather gets warmer, the City of Nanaimo would like to remind residents as they seek out a variety of recreational opportunities that it is important to be safe in or near water. Within City limits, there are beautiful beaches, isolated islands, lovely lakes and refreshing rivers for various water sports and activities.

In spite of COVID-19 and facility closures, residents are encouraged to stay safe while near or in the water because 64% of drownings that occur in BC happen between May and September each year. The Lifesaving Society website shows that 35% of these drownings occur in relation to boating incidents (e.g. powerboats, canoes, and inflatable craft).

Contributing factors to the drownings were a failure to utilize a personal floatation device (PFD) and absent or distracted supervision of children. Parents should always ensure that they are within arm's length reach of their children while around water because drowning can occur in as little as four seconds!

To stay safe this season while boating and getting active by the water, please follow these recommendations:

1. Be prepared: check equipment and weather forecast; know the waters and your ability.
2. Share your water sport activity in the company of a friend or a family member; bring a buddy.
3. Wear a PFD when boating and when young children are close to the water.
4. Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
5. Avoid the use of alcohol and drugs as they impair decision making and physical abilities.
6. Use active supervision and stay within arms length reach of children while in or around the water.
7. Know how to call for help: 9-1-1 within City limits, *16 on a cell phone or channel 16 on a VHF radio.
8. Learn how to swim.

Strategic Link: The City of Nanaimo is committed to the safety and well-being of its residents.

Key Points

- Having a PFD while in the water is one of the best ways to prevent drownings.
- Most drownings that happen in BC (64%) occur between the months of May to September.

Quotes

"Nanaimo is surrounded by water with lakes, rivers and the ocean. Parks, Recreation and Culture staff would like to remind residents to follow all of the recommendations while near or in bodies of water to prevent drowning and to stay safe as the weather warms up."

Ashley Rowe
Aquatics Coordinator
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- From the boating-related drownings that happened in BC in 2019, 35% were at lakes, 30% were at rivers and 15% were at oceans (15%). 77% of victims were male and 23% were female.
- Be aware that those most at risk of drowning are children under 5 years old and males aged 18-49.

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Contact:

Kathy Gonzales
Aquatics Manager
City of Nanaimo
kathy.gonzales@nanaimo.ca



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