

## NEWS RELEASE

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### City of Nanaimo launches Water Safety Education Team

#### Summary

Work on the reopening strategy for City of Nanaimo aquatic facilities, which were closed as a result of COVID-19, is underway. In the meantime, the Parks, Recreation and Culture department has launched a Water Safety Education Team (WSET) that will be out at various places in Nanaimo educating residents about water safety throughout July and August.

This type of water education is normally shared during registered swim lessons, at lifeguarded waterfronts and in recreation facilities. Safety during this pandemic remains top of mind for the aquatic staff as they share information in hopes of keeping community members safe while they visit local parks and beaches.

The WSET is composed of redeployed aquatic staff who will be focusing on themes around drowning prevention, safety supervision, advanced lifesaving courses and boating safety, while they provide demonstrations and creative activities to engage participants.

The WSET can also be booked for water safety presentations for summer camp youth, daycare children and other community groups by calling Ashley Rowe, Aquatics Coordinator, at 250-756-5243 or through email at [ashley.rowe@nanaimo.ca](mailto:ashley.rowe@nanaimo.ca).

Another water safety program happening this summer is occurring at Westwood Lake. Residents will be able to borrow a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while swimming in the lake and then return it after the swim. This PFD loan program is sponsored by the City of Nanaimo and Commercial Aquatic Supplies.

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

#### Key Points

- To book a water safety session for community groups, call Ashley Rowe at 250-756-5243 or through email at [ashley.rowe@nanaimo.ca](mailto:ashley.rowe@nanaimo.ca).
- The new Personal Flotation Device Loan Program is at Westwood Lake this summer. Residents borrow the appropriate-sized PFD and then return it when finished swimming.

#### Quotes

"We are very excited to launch The Water Safety Education Team who will be out and about in the community this summer at a variety of different waterfronts sharing water safety messages. The team will also be available to host presentations for summer camp youth, daycare children and other community groups."

Ashley Rowe  
Aquatics Coordinator  
City of Nanaimo

## Quick Facts

- Be aware that those most at risk of drowning are children under 5 years old and males aged 18-49.
- Most drownings that happen in BC (64%) occur between the months of May to September.
- Having a PFD while in the water is one of the best ways to prevent drownings.

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