

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Swim to Survive

*City lifeguards teach youth how to survive an unexpected fall into deep water*

### Summary

As a harbourfront community with plenty of lakes, rivers, and waterfront, it's important to know how to be safe around water, how to escape a fall into deep water and how to safely help others that may have fallen in. Partnering with Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, each year the City of Nanaimo's Aquatics Department takes the plunge into the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive+ programs. These programs teach students in grades 3 and 7 important water safety and survival skills.

The Swim to Survive Program is a simple, straightforward and focused approach to surviving an unexpected fall into water. In the fall/winter, the City of Nanaimo hosted 1182 students in grade 3. The Swim to Survive program includes a lifeguard-led classroom session and three 45 minute instructional pool sessions created by the Lifesaving Society.

The Swim to Survive+ program takes the program a step further for youth in grade 7 and includes real-world scenario training. This spring a total of 1197 students in grade 7 experienced the program and learned:

1. how to roll into deep water, tread for one minute and swim 50m with clothes on
2. how to help a friend or another person in distress in deep water without putting themselves in danger (talk, throw, reach) and
3. basic physical fitness concepts through interval training and a fitness swim

The program includes two 45 minute pool sessions at Beban and one 45 minute session at Westwood Lake.

As the summer and warmer days come, water becomes a destination. Youth are at higher risk around water, especially as they spend more time with friends away from adult supervision. The City of Nanaimo's lifeguards and aquatic professionals play a very important role in teaching critical swimming skills and encouraging students to use their judgement, knowledge and awareness to stay safe and to safely assist others around water in an emergency. While the Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive+ programs are a great starting point for water survival, the City also has swimming lessons available through the Parks and Recreation Activity Guide. Visit [recreation.nanaimo.ca](https://recreation.nanaimo.ca) to register.

**Strategic Link:** Nanaimo City Council and staff strive to make all recreation and wellness programs inclusive and accessible while educating community members on the health and wellness benefits of physical and social recreation.

## Key Points

- Each year, the City of Nanaimo's lifeguards and aquatic professionals organize and lead Swim to Survive programming for students in grade 3 and 7, teaching the basics of how to survive the first moments after an unexpected fall into water.
- While not a replacement for swimming lessons, the Swim to Survive program (created by the Lifesaving Society) aims to reduce accidents around water and ultimately reduce drowning.
- This school year, the City of Nanaimo hosted 1182 students in grade 3 (fall/winter) for Swim to Survive training and 1197 students in grade 7 (spring) for Swim to Survive+ training.

## Quotes

"Swimming, boating and watersports are a part of what makes island time great during Nanaimo's summers. Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive+ are critical programs for our children and youth, especially as we head into the busy, sunny season. Play safe out there, Nanaimo!"

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

## Quick Facts

- The Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard is a minimum national standard of swimming skill for all children, and defines the essential minimum skills required to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. It is not meant to be a replacement for swimming lessons, but the minimum requirement for surviving the first moments of an unexpected fall into water.
- According to the Ontario branch of the Lifesaving Society, research has shown that the thrill seeking, pleasure seeking part of the teen brain develops at a faster rate than the judgment and impulse inhibition skills that adults have. This increases the risks when youth are around water.

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