



WATER SAFETY ON HOLIDAY

Q. Why is water safety on holidays important?

A. While holidaying, you may experience aquatic environments you are unfamiliar with or that have changed since your last visit. To enjoy these locations safely, it is important to know the different safety aspects that apply to different aquatic environments. Many aquatic locations away from home, such as rivers, lakes and dams, or pools in holiday or caravan parks do not have lifeguards on duty.

Q. What should I do if I'm holidaying in an unfamiliar aquatic location?

A. Conditions can change all the time, and a spot that was safe to swim in the morning, may have developed a strong current in the afternoon. Before you enter any water, spend time observing it, looking for any rips or currents. Ask a local about the waterway. Never dive in, and always enter the water slowly, feet first. Never swim alone and ensure children are actively supervised – Keep Watch and be within arms reach.

Q. What steps can I take to keep my family safe when holidaying near the water?

A. Discuss with your children that they are not to enter the water without a parent present. Explain that even though they may be competent swimmers at home, the conditions can change dramatically in other environments and they need to be aware of this. Be aware of objects in the water, from rocks to water craft. Obey any signs to stay in a designated area. Make sure you do the right thing as children will model their behaviour on you.

Q. What about if I'm visiting a water park?

A. In exactly the same way as a public pool, lifeguards at water parks are on hand to ensure that all patrons can enjoy their time at the facility, however this does not mean they are responsible for babysitting young children. Parents must continue to actively supervise children at these venues. This means being within arms reach at all times.

Q. What dangers exist at inland waterways?

A. Many families enjoy holidays at locations near rivers, lakes and dams. It is important to remember that at these locations the water conditions can change hourly. Areas which did not have a current in the morning may have one in the afternoon. These locations can also present dangers with crumbling or slippery banks, shifting floors, submerged objects, water craft and cold water.

Q. What about using equipment such as canoes, kayaks and jet skis on holiday?

A. If you are going to use equipment such as these items, it is important to have instruction before you enter the water. Check that your craft is well maintained and that you are wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
Check weather conditions before heading out.

Many Australians enjoy spending their holidays near the water – be it camping by a river, a trip to the beach or visiting a pool – it is important to know how to safely enjoy all aquatic locations.

Water Safety on Holidays CHECKLIST:

- Check the conditions with a local before venturing in the water
- Where possible, swim in patrolled areas
- Check the condition of all equipment before use
- Keep an eye on changing weather conditions before heading into water
- Take the time to observe any water before entering
- Watch out for other people especially water craft when in the water
- Ensure children are actively supervised (within arms reach) at all times
- Don't drink alcohol if you are planning to undertake any aquatic activity

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

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