

Water safety - dangers of cooling off in open water

⚠️ A plea to parents to prevent pupils drowning this summer

With pupils nearing the end of school, combined with the hot weather, we are tragically seeing fatalities on inland waterways. Young people seek out dams, reservoirs, meres, brooks, quarries, canals, lakes and rivers as a place to cool off and have fun, without realising the hidden dangers. Every year young people drown in our waterways.

Please tell your children not to be tempted to cool off in open water. Lymm and the local area of Cheshire is surrounded by open water sites. Please talk to your child. Keep them safe.



Over 85% of accidental drownings occur at open water sites. Many of these drownings occur due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of open water safety. The water may look calm on the surface, but there may still be strong undercurrents that could pull even a strong swimmer under. There may be dangerous debris hidden under the surface to entangle or drain which will pull you under.

The water may also feel relatively warm on the surface, but just a few feet below can be icy cold even in the hot weather and can very quickly cause severe cramp and hypothermia.

Young people often misjudge their swimming ability - they may view a river or lake as a tempting means of cooling off during a hot spell of weather, but fail to appreciate the harmful effects that the cold water can have on their stamina and strength.

Due to these dangers, please speak to your children and teenagers, tell them not to swim anywhere other than in purpose-built and supervised swimming pools.

Don't:

- Swim at unsupervised (**un-lifeguarded sites**) including lakes, quarries reservoirs and rivers
- Jump into the water from heights or ‘tombstone’ – it’s nicknamed tombstone for a reason.
- Swim into deep water which will be much colder

Currents

When two currents of water come together and meet causing a ‘whirlpool’ water moves round in a circle and it is difficult to escape, often an undercurrent will drag down your legs and body in the water.

Cold Shock

When a person suffers from cold shock the swimmer can inhale water due to involuntary gasping reflex and cause immediate loss of consciousness, which will result in drowning.

Exposure to the head and chest can result in a sudden increase in the heart rate and blood pressure, which can result in a cardiac arrest.

<http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/home/water-safety-advice>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I455hrePgls>

[Water safety for teenagers and young people | Canal & River Trust \(canalrivertrust.org.uk\)](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

<https://rlss.org.uk/water-safety/water-safety/water-safety-in-open-water/>

