

LIFESAVING SOCIETY
National Drowning Prevention Week – July 16-22, 2023

Suggested Themes and Messages

INTRODUCTION

The Lifesaving Society designates the third full week in July as National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) to focus community and media attention on the drowning problem and drowning prevention.

NDPW provides a focus around which community Water Smart® educators can plan news releases, do television, and radio interviews, run public demonstrations, deliver public training events, and otherwise promote drowning prevention messages and events. Many successful community events are launched with a Mayor's Proclamation of Drowning Prevention Week. Drowning disproportionately affects marginalized communities, the best community events will be accessible to all.

The themes below will be promoted throughout Canada during NDPW. These themes address trends seen in the Society's drowning reports and data from the Drowning Prevention Research Centre. The messages are suggestions for how to target the 7 key themes of NDPW. These themes and messages can be used on social media - be sure to include the **#NDPW2023** and **#SNPN2023** hashtags. When posting or creating pictures, remember people are diverse, inclusion is key.

7 MAIN THEMES TO EMPHASIZE

The main messages were selected from the major risk factors as identified in the Drowning reports from the past several years. Please review your Branch drowning report for area specific statistics at <https://www.lifesaving.org/public-education/drowning-reports>

1. **The Drowning Problem.** Over 400 Canadians die in preventable water-related incidents annually. Even one drowning is one too many.
2. **Supervise Children.** Always directly supervise children around the water - if you are not within arms' reach, you've gone too far.
3. **Boating Safety.** Choose it. Use it. Always wear a lifejacket when in a boat.
4. **Learn to Swim.** In most drownings, the victim never intended to go in the water and was often close to safety – could you survive a sudden and unexpected fall into the water?
5. **Stay Sober In, On, and Around the Water.** Alcohol consumption is a factor in many water related fatalities. Both alcohol and cannabis use impair balance, judgment, and reflexes. Stay sober when in, on or around the water.
6. **Open Water Safety.** Make smart choices before going in, on or around the water.
7. **You can save a life!** Yours, and someone else's. Take a learn-to-swim, lifesaving or first aid class today.

THEME 1 - SUNDAY: INTRODUCTION TO NDPW & THE DROWNING PROBLEM

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Activities & Resources	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and highlight National Drowning Prevention Week. • Introduce the drowning problem in a Canadian context (reference the current Drowning Report for statistics). • Introduce the drowning problem in a local context (reference the most recent provincial and territorial Drowning Reports for statistics) 	<p>What</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) is the Lifesaving Society's annual drowning prevention awareness event. <p>When</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lifesaving Society's National Drowning Prevention Week takes place July 16-22, 2023. <p>Who is at risk – the statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With over 450 Canadians drowning in preventable water-related incidents annually, drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional death among Canadians under 60+ years of age. Even one drowning is one too many. • The age groups with the highest risk of drowning are young adults 20-34 years of age, baby boomers 50-64 years of age and seniors over 65. Children under the age of 5 are also at risk. • Most commonly victims of drowning are male, especially those between 20-34 years of age. • Study – Exploring a Hidden Epidemic: Drowning Among Adults 65 years of age and older. • Over 236,000 people drown every year worldwide, NDPW leads into World Drowning Prevention Day on July 25th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare July 16-22, 2023 Drowning Prevention Week in your community. • Get a proclamation from your City Councils/Mayor (can be the week before to kick off NDPW). • Get in contact with local news and radio to promote drowning prevention. • Invite the media to your facility. • Contact your Lifesaving Society branch for a copy of a proclamation request letter and a media release outline. • Contact local businesses to support NDPW (e.g., local boating stores can provide lifejacket fittings and boat safety kits; pool companies can promote fencing and backyard pool safety checklists). • Reach out to area community drowning prevention coalitions who can promote NDPW activities and messages. 	<p>#NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #WDPD #DrowningIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. • Post photos of people in front of a NDPW banner. • Post a picture of a dressed-up manikin on a creative drowning prevention adventure for each day of NDPW.

THEME 2 - MONDAY: SUPERVISE CHILDREN

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activities	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting parents and/or caregivers of children under the age of 5 years. Always directly supervise children in on and around the water. 	<p>Don't wait until it appears on your News Feed!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of drownings in children under 5 years of age is due to a lack of supervision. <p>Drowning is fast and silent; often occurring in less than 30 seconds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is critical that parents watch their children while they are in the water and not be distracted – watch your children not your phone. Stay within arm's reach! Adults should always be within arm's reach of young children when in or near the water. <p>Watch Me Not Your Phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unattended toddlers are high risk because they are mobile, curious and require close and constant supervision by an adult. Lifejackets and other flotation devices are a layer of protection, but do not replace adult supervision. Most of these children were alone and playing near water when they fell in and drowned. <p>Infants and young children under 5 years are especially at risk in the bathtub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children less than 5 years of age should always be watched during this daily activity. Leave your phone or tablet out of the bathroom. <p>Backyard Pool Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss backyard pool safety. Each year, private backyard pools continue to be the primary setting where children 1-4 years of age most often drown. Provide on guard and direct supervision by designating a responsible adult to be a 'backyard pool lifeguard'. Make sure water toys are stored away after the swim is over so that children are not encouraged to return next to the pool. It is important to ensure that your backyard pool is designed to be safe so that it is not accessible to children. Control and restrict access to the water with multiple layers of protection such as self-closing gates, fences, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Experts@LifeSaving.org for colouring sheets for kids Provide a backyard pool safety checklist https://www.lifesavingsociety.com/media/315394/56backyardpoolcheckliston080623.pdf Backyard pool safety (games and tips) https://www.perfectswimming.com/en/home Host a family swim safety day 	<p>#NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #DrowningsIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention #WithinArmsReach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. Watch me, not your phone campaign materials. Photos of caregivers/supervisors within arm's reach of children. Photo of a parent/caregiver on the phone while children are swimming (illustration in several environments, i.e.: chalet, beach, camping, pool) Photo of a parent/caregiver swimming with children while a phone is on the table, appropriately left behind. If relevant include backyard pool safety tips

THEME 3 - TUESDAY: BOATING SAFETY

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activities	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the risk factors associated with boating. Highlight safe boating practices. Promote the Startboating® program for New Canadians. See 	<p>Always Wear a Lifejacket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose It. Use It. Always wear a Lifejacket. Lifejackets do not work if you do not wear them. Not wearing a Lifejacket was a factor in most boating deaths. Lifejackets are like seatbelts. They help you if the unexpected happens. Lifejackets are for every age and ability. Even strong swimmers need to wear lifejackets. <p>Get Trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get the training! Take your boating safety course – get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card. <p>Be Prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know before you go. Check the weather forecast and learn about local hazards. Always have a boat safety kit on board. Check the condition of the boat and accessories. <p>Safety Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STARTboating® is a national program from the Lifesaving Society designed to educate new boaters on the basics of how to be safe and responsible boaters. Never Alone Don't boat alone. Boating alone was a major risk factor in boating-related fatalities. Watch out for other swimmers and boaters. Always have a spotter when towing water skiers and tube riders. Ensure you have boating equipment that is appropriate to the season. Inflatables can obstruct views, float away and take children/adults further out than they intended to be. Limit the use and number of inflatables/pool toys, do not bring them when it is windy. Always wear a lifejacket on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a boat safety day with search & rescue/conservation officers at a public, provincial or regional park. Run a mock boat rescue at a lake/waterfront - invite media to open discussion on boating safety. Host a lifejacket clinic. Provide a boat equipment/boat safety checklist. Provide a checklist for ensuring your Lifejackets are in good shape. Visit the Splashy Mission Website 	<p>#NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #DrowningIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention #BoatSafety #WearALifejacket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. Send out tweets highlighting statistics around unsafe behaviour when boating. Tweets promoting the PCO exam at branches/affiliates if relevant. Share the STARTboating® campaign materials and/or link to website. Photos of boat and safety equipment. Photos of people wearing PFDs on a boat. Split screen photo of do and don't with PFDs (worn out lifejackets vs. good condition lifejacket, standing up in a boat vs. sitting down properly). Video of how to properly wear and size a PFD on a range of different ages and sizes. Emphasize the importance of every age wearing lifejackets regardless of swimming ability.

THEME 4 – WEDNESDAY: LEARN TO SWIM

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activity	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the importance of learning to swim. Emphasize survival swimming skills. Highlight opportunities to learn Swim to Survive. Contact your summer affiliates to involve all pools in Swim to Survive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swim skills need to be taught; they are not innate. Most drowning occur close to safety – can you survive an accidental or unintentional fall into the water? Basic swimming ability is a requirement of any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada. Swim to Survive® defines the minimum swim skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Swim to Survive® is different than swimming lessons - not a replacement for them. Swim to Survive® teaches the necessary skills to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Meeting the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard is an important first step to being safe around water. The Swim to Survive Skills are based on most common contributors to drowning in Canada Make sure all family members can learn the 3 skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Roll into deep water — Tread water for 1 minute — Swim 50 meters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up Swim to Survive® events at local facilities. Run a Swim to Survive® Day Contact the Alberta and NWT Branch for Swim to Survive® resources Promote Lifesaving Society swim lessons in your community. Advocate local politicians to get Swim to Survive into schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #SwimToSurvive #DrowningIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. Post a Family Swim to Survive® poster. Photos of families, children, teens, young adults and grandparents trying the Swim to Survive® standard. Video of people doing Swim to Survive®. Video of the variations of the Swim to Survive® skills. Run a social media giveaway contest for Lifesaving Society swag. Can be purchased at Shop.LifeSaving.org

THEME 5 – THURSDAY: STAY SOBER IN, ON AND AROUND THE WATER

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activities	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share messages about the importance of staying sober while in on and around the water. 	<p>Boat & Swim Sober</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and drugs impair your senses, reduce your ability to react to danger, and increase your chance of being involved in a fatal drowning. Impaired boating is just like impaired driving. By operating a boat under the influence, you put not only your life at risk, but also those of your passengers and other boaters. <p>Alcohol and Water Don't Mix!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol is the number one intoxicant contributing to drowning fatalities in Canada every year. In Alberta, alcohol is a contributing factor to fatal drowning in 32% of boating fatalities, 53% of swimming fatalities in young adults, and 39% of swimming fatalities in older adults. In the Northwest Territories, alcohol is a contributing factor to fatal drowning in 37% of boating fatalities, 48% of swimming fatalities in young adults, and 32% of swimming fatalities in older adults. Don't Drink and Drown! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beer goggles simulator for walking along a dock or other "water" related course. Could include a small wading pool under appropriate lifeguard supervision. If possible, obtain beer goggles and a vehicle simulator, have the simulator set up for a boat instead of a car. Hand out Water Smart Rack Cards and other Watersmart Education materials. They can be purchased at Shop.LifeSaving.Org or acquired for free on LifeSaving.Org Contact the Alberta and NWT Branch about posters and other safety education items you might be able to hand out. 	<p>#NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #DrowningIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention #WaterSmart #BoatSober #SwimSober #DontDrinkAndDrown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. Boat Sober posters and images (Canadian Safe Boating Council and Lifesaving Society, MADD, etc.)

THEME 6 - FRIDAY: OPEN WATER SAFETY

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activities	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeting all those who work or play in or around open water. Open water areas constitute the highest number of fatal drownings in Canada every year. Emphasize that thinking ahead, knowing your limits, and preparation helps avoid many injuries and deaths in open water. 	<p>Stay Safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, 70% of all fatal drownings in Canada occur in open water such as lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and ditches. Swimming in open water is different from swimming in a pool. Know your limits and check local conditions before going in. If you're not within arms' reach, you've gone too far! Always supervise children. Never Alone: Many fatal drownings occur when people are swimming alone. Always swim with a buddy! When you have the choice, swim in supervised open water areas or environments. Include messaging about never using a boat, inflatable, or kayak alone. <p>Be Prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know before you go! Check weather and water conditions before heading out. Know what's below! Go in feet first the first time. Protect your neck! Never dive into shallow water. Areas of open water may have currents or waves that can pull you under. Learn local conditions before entering. Leave inflatable mattresses or other floating toys at home. At the lake or beach, you are at a risk to be swept out past safety. Inflatables can obstruct views, float away and take children/adults further out than they intended to be. Limit the use and number of inflatables/pool toys, do not bring them when it is windy. Always wear a lifejacket on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media giveaway contest for participants who share pictures or stories about being safe around open water. Plan an open water safety scavenger hunt. Host a colouring contest for local children. Contact your local Branch about activity and colouring sheets for children and youth. Create a labelled picture of a local open water area identifying hazards. Provide a pre-departure safety checklist for people to use before heading out to their local waterfront. Set up a safety display at a local waterfront that is used for recreation activities like boating, swimming, and wading. Hand out Water Smart Rack Cards – Can be purchased at Shop.LifeSaving.org 	<p>#NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #DrowningIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention #WaterSmart #BeWaterSmart #KnowYourLimits #FeetFirstFirstTime #KnowBeforeYouGo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. Focus on local stories to reinforce statistics. Photos of people doing activities in and around open water locations. Photos of supervised children playing in and around open water areas. The children need to be wearing lifejackets and be Within Arms' Reach of their adult. Photos of dangerous open water conditions like waves, obvious currents, underwater rocks, weeds, etc.

THEME 7 - SATURDAY: YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE!

Purpose	Key Messages	Suggested Action & Activities	Suggested Social Media Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize training that can save lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic swimming ability is a requirement of any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada. • Register yourself and your family in Lifesaving Society swimming lessons. Swimming is a life skill that lasts a lifetime. • Take a Lifesaving Society Bronze course to learn important self-rescue and first aid skills. • Learn how to rescue others from water emergencies in the Lifesaving Society's Bronze Medallion course. • Take a Bronze medal, Lifesaving First Aid, or CPR course today. • Talk about the implications of trying to rescue others when not trained in water rescue. • Learn about marine navigation, take a Pleasure Craft Operators course. • Learn about your boat and your paddle when you buy one. • Know your swimming ability and respect your limits. • Stay informed about water safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a CPR or water rescue demonstration at your local pool. • Promote the ladder approach and how the right training can make a difference. • Provide information on your facilities courses. • Talk about the new role of the Lifesaving Society in providing swimming lessons in Canada. • Share a link to your upcoming courses page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #NDPW2023 #SNPN2023 #DrowningsIsPreventable #DrowningPrevention #LearnToSwim • Send out tweets highlighting Provincial and/or National statistics. • Photos of children and adults taking swimming lessons. • Photos of public trying lifesaving skills. • Photos of a group of people doing CPR on manikins. • Photo of Bronze medals. • Social media giveaway contest for first aid equipment and/or whistle