

BE A SUMMER SAFETY SUPERHERO

MAKE A SPLASH SAFELY | GRADES K-6

1. THE SWIM TEAM RULES

THE SLOGAN: "Look before you leap, swim where the water isn't too deep, and always have a promise to keep!"

- **Look Before You Leap**

- » Prevent diving injuries: Checking the area first so you don't dive into hidden rocks, logs or shallow bottoms.
- » Check for swimmers: Do not jump directly on top of someone else in the water.

- **Swim Where the Water Isn't Too Deep**

- » Prevent exhaustion: staying in depths matching your skill level keeps you from getting tired out in deep areas.
- » Make sure you can touch: Ensure you can easily stand up if you get scared or get a cramp.

- **Always Have a Promise to Keep**

- » Encourage the buddy system: Look out for your swim partner.
- » Promote rule-following: Honor your commitment to water safety rules and lifeguard instructions.

NEVER SWIM ALONE: Always swim with a "Water Buddy" and make sure an adult is sitting nearby watching you the entire time.

OBEY THE LIFEGUARD: Only swim in areas marked safe by lifeguards. Listen to their whistles – they are there to keep you safe!

2. SUN, SAND AND SURF

LIFE JACKETS: If you are playing on a dock, riding in a boat or using a paddleboard, "Don't just pack it, wear your life jacket!" Keep it zipped, buckled and snug.

BEAT THE HEAT: The summer sun can drain your energy. Take regular water breaks, apply sunscreen often and rest in the shade so you don't get overheated.

FEET FIRST: Always check the water depth and look out for hidden rocks or logs before jumping in. Never dive headfirst into shallow or unfamiliar water.

3. WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

REACH OR THROW, DON'T GO: If a friend is struggling in the water, do not jump in after them! If you do, you could get into trouble too.

BE A HELPER: Stay safely on dry land. Find something long to reach out to them (like a pool noodle, broom or long branch) or throw something that floats (like a life ring, cooler or a basketball).

CALL FOR HELP: Yell as loud as you can for an adult or lifeguard, and call 911 immediately.

SUMMER WATER SAFETY

QUIZ

GRADES K-6

Instructions: Circle the correct answer for each safety question.

1. Who should always be with you when you go swimming?

- a) Just your favorite pet
- b) A "Water Buddy" and an adult who is watching closely
- c) No one, it is fun to swim completely alone

2. True or False: If a friend is struggling in deep water, you should dive right in to pull them out yourself.

☐ True ☐ False

3. When should you wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket?

- a) Every time you ride on a boat, jet ski or kayak
- b) Only when it starts to get dark outside
- c) Only if you forgot your sunglasses

4. What is the safest way to enter a lake, river or swimming pool if you don't know the depth?

- a) Headfirst dive
- b) Running flip
- c) Feet first, after checking for hidden hazards

5. If you feel dizzy, tired or too hot while playing in the sun, you should:

- a) Keep running around until you get used to it
- b) Take a break in the shade, drink water and tell an adult
- c) Swim out into the deepest part of the lake

OPEN WATER RISK AWARENESS

SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE | GRADES 7-12

1. The Mechanics of Open Water

- **Hidden Hazards:** Unlike swimming pools, natural bodies of water like lakes and rivers have unpredictable currents, sudden drop-offs, sharp underwater drop-offs and tangled vegetation.
- **Rip Currents:** At ocean beaches or major lakes, rip currents can quickly pull swimmers away from the shore. If caught in one, stay calm. Do not fight the current. Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current, then swim back to land at an angle.
- **Dehydration & Exhaustion:** Heat exhaustion impairs physical coordination and swimming ability. Heavy sweating in the summer sun depletes your body's water supply – hydrate constantly with water, not soda or energy drinks.

2. Peer Rescue & Water Craft Navigation

- **The Rescue Hierarchy:** If someone is drowning, remember “PREACH, REACH, THROW, ROW, GO.”
 - » *Preach:* Shout instructions to talk them through a panic.
 - » *Reach/Throw:* Extend a paddle, rope or towel, or toss a floating object.
 - » *Row/Go:* Use a boat if available. Never attempt a swimming rescue unless you are professionally trained; a panicked victim will easily pull you under.
- **Vessel Laws:** New York State law mandates that all operators and passengers on jet skis, paddleboards, kayaks and towed tubes wear a properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times.
- **Substance Risks:** Alcohol and drug use are a leading factor in teenage summer drownings. Impaired judgment leads to riskier behavior, slows reaction times and

SUMMER RISK & SURVIVAL QUIZ

GRADES 7-12

Instructions: Select the most accurate response for these high-level safety scenarios.

1. If you are caught in a powerful rip current at a beach, your immediate action should be to:

- a) Swim directly against the current back to the beach*
- b) Swim parallel to the shoreline until you break free from the current*
- c) Dive to the bottom and hold onto rocks or sand*

2. Why are natural waterways (lakes and rivers) inherently more dangerous than swimming pools?

- a) The water temperature is always identical from top to bottom*
- b) They feature shifting currents, zero visibility, hidden debris, and sudden drop-offs*
- c) They lack concrete walls to hold onto*

3. When executing a shore-based rescue for a struggling swimmer, what is the safest initial strategy?

- a) Immediately dive into the water and swim out to grab them*
- b) Wait for them to stop moving before attempting a rescue*
- c) Use the "Preach, Reach, Throw" method to keep yourself safely on land*

4. According to boating and watercraft safety statistics, what substance drastically increases the risk of water accidents by slowing physical response times?

- a) Caffeine*
- b) Sugar*
- c) Alcohol or drugs*

5. NYS boating laws require life jackets to be worn at all times by anyone operating or riding on:

- a) Inflatable pool rafts in shallow water*
- b) Personal watercraft (jet skis), kayaks, canoes and paddleboards*
- c) Large commercial ferry boats only*

PARENT CHECKLIST

SUMMER WATER SAFETY

- ☐ **Active Supervision:** Always designate an adult as the official “Water Watcher” when children are swimming. This person must keep their eyes on the water at all times without the distraction of phone calls, reading or socializing.
- ☐ **Secure Pool Barriers:** Ensure home swimming pools are enclosed by a four-sided fence that is at least four feet high with self-closing and self-latching gates. Keep pool toys out of the water area when not in use so children aren’t tempted to reach for them.
- ☐ **Life Jacket Inspection:** Ensure all life jackets are U.S. Coast Guard-approved and fit appropriately based on your child’s current weight. Note that inflatable “water wings,” pool noodles and plastic rafts are toys, not certified life-saving flotation devices.
- ☐ **Water Competency:** Enroll children in certified, age-appropriate swimming lessons. Ensure your children know baseline survival skills, such as how to step into deep water, return to the surface, float on their back and exit a pool without using a ladder.
- ☐ **Emergency Preparedness:** Keep a dedicated safety kit near your home water spaces, including a first aid kit, a reaching pole and a charged phone to call 911. Parents and teen caregivers are highly encouraged to maintain up-to-date CPR certification.

LOCAL RESOURCES

SWIMMING & SUMMER WATER SAFETY

The following organizations across the Madison and Oneida County region provide affordable swimming instruction, water safety clinics, and financial aid options to ensure all children have access to life-saving swimming skills.

1. YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley

The YMCA features seasonal group and private swim instruction for all age brackets, supported by their "Changing Lives Financial Assistance Program" for eligible local families.

- **Oneida Branch:** 701 Seneca Street, Oneida, NY. Phone: (315) 363-7788
- **Rome Branch:** 301 W. Bloomfield Street, Rome, NY. Phone: (315) 336-3500

2. YMCA of Central New York

Provides comprehensive youth aquatics, water competency assessments and sliding-scale swim lesson scholarship opportunities.

- **Northwest Family & East Area Branches:** *Contact regional coordinators for youth summer program placement evaluations and donor-funded lesson assistance details.*

3. Community Parks & Regional Programs

- **City of Oneida Parks & Recreation:** *Manages community aquatic facilities, scheduling seasonal public swim times and local summer recreation program options. Phone: 315.363.3590*
- **Oneida County Youth Bureau:** *Partners with regional recreation centers to maximize summer program access, swimming lessons, and safety resources for children under age 21. Phone: 315.798.5027*
- **Madison County Public Health:** *Offers educational guides on drowning prevention, blue-green algae updates for local lakes, and beach safety protocols. Phone: 315.366.2361*

LOCAL WATER

SAFETY DISCLOSURE

Districts should fill in the bracketed information and post this to their "Water Safety" landing page to comply with local safety education initiatives and state public disclosure requirements.

[Insert School District Name] Summer Water Safety & Drowning Prevention

In alignment with regional safety benchmarks and NYS recreational guidelines, [Insert School District Name] provides the following community connections to ensure families can access vital swimming instruction and water safety tools ahead of the summer season.

Local Low-Cost/No-Cost Swimming Options:

- **Facility Name:** [e.g., Oneida Family YMCA / Local Town Pool]
- **Address:** [Insert physical location address]
- **Assistance Offered:** [e.g., Sliding-scale financial assistance/Youth Bureau waivers/Family scholarships]
- **Contact/Registration:** [Insert program phone number or website link]

How to Secure Swim Lessons:

To connect your student with a structured swimming program this summer, we recommend:

1. Reaching out to the **YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley** or the **YMCA of Central New York** to ask about seasonal youth enrollment windows and financial assistance applications.
2. Monitoring updates from the **Oneida County Youth Bureau** or **Madison County Health Department** for town-sponsored public pool lesson schedules.
3. Utilizing the **American Red Cross "Find a Class"** online portal to track down certified Water Safety Instructors (WSI) operating within our immediate zip codes.