

Holiday Drowning Toll Again Hits 10

The Christmas and New Year holiday period has resulted in ten drowning deaths in New Zealand. This is the same number of fatalities as the holiday period last year.

Statistics released today by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) for the holiday period show that there were eight recreational drowning deaths and two non recreational.

The average drowning toll for the holiday period (last five years) is seven drowning deaths.

The following summarise the 2008/09 holiday period drowning fatalities:

- Environment:**
- 3 Beaches
 - 2 Lake
 - 2 River
 - 1 0-1 km off shore
 - 1 Pond
 - 1 Tidal Waters
- Activity:**
- 4 Swimming
 - 2 Accidental Immersion
 - 2 Powered Boat
 - 2 Snorkelling
- Age:**
- 1 0-4 years
 - 0 5-14 years
 - 3 15-24 years
 - 2 25-34 years
 - 0 35-44 years
 - 2 45-54 years
 - 1 55-64 years
 - 1 65+ years

Ethnicity:

- 3 European
- 3 Maori
- 2 Asian
- 2 Pacific Peoples

Gender:

- 9 Male
- 1 Female

Region:

- 4 Auckland
- 2 Canterbury
- 1 Bay of Plenty
- 1 Gisborne
- 1 Otago
- 1 Waikato

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge comments; “holiday time lends itself to a dramatic increase in aquatic activity and with that is a sharp rise in drowning numbers. Regrettably, these holidays have provided for 10 deaths that didn’t need to occur. We are fortunate that there weren’t a great many more drowning deaths, as the reported rescue incidents and near misses suggest a real lack of planning and attention to some basic safety requirements.”

“Complacency is too often a factor for New Zealanders around the water. No New Zealander can, or should, take for granted access to the water in what ever form of activity. There is no point being in, on or around the water if you don’t have the skills and knowledge to be there. It is not reasonable to rely on lifeguards or other rescue services when precautions and safety measures could negate such a need.”

Claridge continues, “Year after year the spectacle of a rescue at sea, the beach or the pool overshadows the fundamentals of enjoying the water safely. More often than not a drowning or rescue would not have resulted if basic preparations were carried out.”

Claridge concludes, “The next two-three weeks extend the drowning season in New Zealand until school commences again. 40% of all drowning deaths occur in the summer months and by their nature, these incidents are invariably recreation based. Water Safety New Zealand makes a further reminder to be prepared when venturing to the water, along with reminding parents to ensure small children are well supervised at all times.”

Ends...

See following for:

1. Holiday Drowning Statistics

For more information or interview contact:

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Holiday Drowning Statistics



Drowning statistics for the Christmas/New Year holiday period 1979/1980 to 2008/2009

Year	Number of Drownings
1979 / 1980	4
1980 / 1981	8
1981 / 1982	14
1982 / 1983	15
1983 / 1984	8
1984 / 1985	21
1985 / 1986	16
1986 / 1987	7
1987 / 1988	4
1988 / 1989	10
1989 / 1990	9
1990 / 1991	14
1991 / 1992	9
1992 / 1993	8
1993 / 1994	9
1994 / 1995	8
1995 / 1996	10
1996 / 1997	11
1997 / 1998	16
1998 / 1999	13
1999 / 2000	12
2000 / 2001	8
2001 / 2002	13
2002 / 2003	5
2003 / 2004	11
2004 / 2005	8
2005 / 2006	3
2006 / 2007	3
2007 / 2008	10
2008 / 2009	10

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