

## The importance of water safety

At the Canal & River Trust we look after over 2,000 miles of canals and rivers. Being next to our canals and rivers can make you healthier and happier, but we also know how important it is to remember to be careful and always stay safe around water.



### Some facts about accidents around water

- Search, rescue and emergency services respond to over 100,000 water-related events each year
- Every year, in the UK, around 400 people die from drowning as a result of an accident in or around water
- Thousands of others are left with severe, life-changing injuries
- Some of these deaths and injuries are the result of risky activities, but many are the result of simple accidents
- Around 50% of people who lose their lives never intended to go in the water
- Drowning is the third most common death in young people

## Stop and Think

Help children to understand the hidden dangers

- Low water temperatures cause the body to go into cold water shock and can claim a life in minutes
- Water can be much deeper or shallower than expected and cause serious harm if jumping in
- Steep slimy banks make it hard to get out of the water
- The ground shelves away steeply so you can quickly become out of your depth
- Reeds and other plants can get tangled around your limbs
- Mud makes it difficult to walk even if you can stand up
- Litter and waste can trap your feet and cause injury
- There is lots of underwater machinery to help operate the locks
- There may be hidden currents especially when locks are in operation.



Look for signing and information boards to help you understand any dangers



## What to do if you get into trouble in the water

### Fight your instincts

If you were to fall into cold water you are likely to be confused and frightened and your natural instinct will be to fight the water – to swim hard. But the cold water will make you gasp uncontrollably, your heart will beat really fast, you'll lose energy quickly and breathe in lots of water, and eventually your muscles will become paralysed.

### Be a starfish – Float to live

Instead, if you float on your back, with your arms and legs stretched out like a starfish, you can keep your airways clear, control your breathing and allow the cold water shock to pass.

Then you can call for help and you will have a much better chance of surviving.



## Stay Together

To avoid getting into trouble in the water, never go alone! Always visit canals and rivers with friends or family members. Children should never go near water without an adult. An adult can point out dangers or help if somebody gets into trouble. Always let someone know where you are going and the time you expect to be back.

Never play near a canal or river on your own and always stay away from the edge.



## What to do if someone else gets into danger?

**One of the most important things you can do is learn what to do if someone needs help. Never get into the water, even if you are a strong swimmer.**

- Stay calm. Always think before you act
- There may be other people around, so shout for help as loudly as you can
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service. Explain your location clearly – use road names,

bridge numbers and describe any landmarks. Use What3words if you can

- Keep an eye on the person, keep talking to them and stay near them. Encourage them to float on their back in a star shape
- If you can, throw a safety line or rope to them. throwing them something that floats. Look for something that floats like a ball or a plastic bottle to support them and then wait for help to arrive.

Dogs enjoy spending time by the water just as much as we do. If your dog does go into the water, don't jump in after it. Instead, encourage your dog to swim to the edge.

## More ideas

Visit our Explorers website for more ideas and activities to help teach young people about water safety: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers)



Stop & Think

Call 999

Stay Together

Float

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## Answers for Spot the Hazards activity

(the children may identify more)

1. Child running off because the parents have become distracted,
2. Children playing too near the water's edge,
3. Child swimming in canal,
4. Children sitting on the edge of a bridge,
5. Children swinging from a tree over a canal,
6. Child about to dive into a lock with strong currents and very deep water,
7. A weir with fast running water,
8. Fisherman with a long pole which can trip people up,
9. Objects in the water which may be sharp or trap your feet,
10. Cyclist very close to the edge

## Answers for the Rescue Stations activity

### Note for Group Leaders:

In each scenario two people should go to get help. They should understand that they are looking for help in contacting the emergency services. Shops and pubs are good places to ask for help. They should look for road names, bridge numbers and other landmarks to help give the location of the accident. They must stay together, stay away from the edge and return as soon as help is found.

### Scenario 1:

#### Suggested solution

- Shout to tell the person to float and then ask if they can stand up.
- Two people go to get help.
- Empty the plastic bottle, put the top back on and throw it to the person. Encourage them to put it under their chin to keep their head out of the water.
- Tell them to kick their legs and try to swim for the bank.
- Blow the whistle to attract attention.

**Discussion:** Even strong swimmers can get into trouble in the water

### Scenario 2:

#### Suggested solution

- Shout to tell the person to float and then ask if they can stand up.
- Two people go to find help
- Those on the bank talk to the person in trouble to reassure them.
- Throw the ball to them. Encourage them to hold the ball to help them float and swim towards the bank.
- Shout to attract attention.

**Discussion:** The wellies will not help as the water could be deep.

### Scenario 3

#### Suggested solution

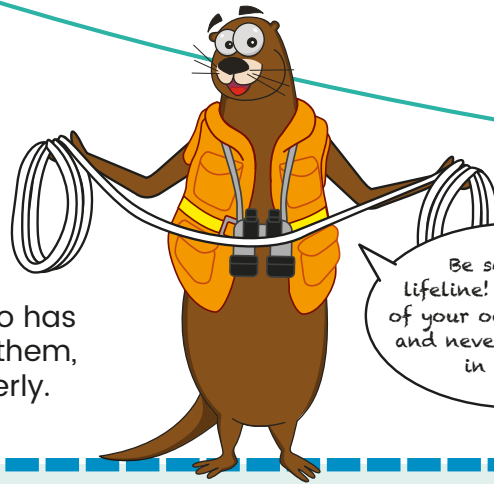
- Shout to tell the person to float and then ask if they can stand up.
- The adult should take control of the situation. Two people go to find help.
- The adult should lie down on the canal bank and, using the scarf or the umbrella, try to reach the person and pull them towards the bank.
- The others talk to the person in the water to reassure them and encourage them to swim for the bank.

**Discussion:** The plastic bag will not help them to float.



## Learn to Throw a Rope

Throwing a safety line or rope to someone who has got into trouble in the water can help to save them, but it's important to know how to do this properly.



Be someone's lifeline! Always think of your own safety first and never put yourself in danger.

### You will need:

A length of rope about 5 metres long



### What to do

Coil the rope, hold one end without tying it to yourself, and throw it towards the person in the water



Sit down or get down low to the ground so that the person pretending to be in the water doesn't pull you in. Tie the rope off to something secure nearby, it's important that you don't get pulled in



## Top Tip



Learn how to make an emergency call and how to ask for help. You should dial 999 and ask for Fire & Rescue. Look for road names, bridge numbers and other landmarks to explain your location.

If you have good internet coverage you could use What3Words to identify your location.

# SAFE

 Remember the SAFE message.  
**Stay Away From the Edge**

## Rescue stations

### What to do

Work in groups to decide how to save a friend who has fallen in the water.

We've come up with three scenarios where you have different items or people to help.

Decide what you would do in each of these scenarios.

Be careful. Some of the items may not be as helpful as you think!

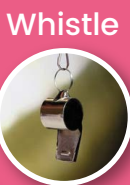


### Scenario 1

Rope



Bottle of water



Whistle



A strong swimmer with life saving certificate



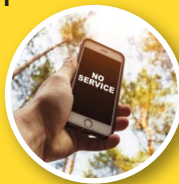
### Scenario 2

Football



Wellies

Phone with no reception



### Scenario 3

Scarf



Jumper



Plastic bag



An adult



Top TIP



Remember the Water Safety Code:  
Stop & Think, Stay Together,  
Call 999, Float to Live.

Next Step → → → →

Act out your ideas, thinking carefully about the order you would do things.

Answers can be found on Water Safety Introduction sheets



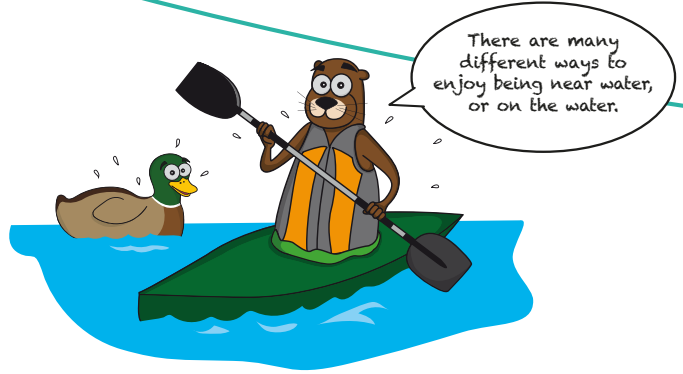
**SAFE** Remember the SAFE message.  
**Stay Away From the Edge**

## Sharing our Waterways

### What to do

List as many different ways to enjoy the water as you can. We've given you a few to start your list.

Think about the things you enjoy doing with your family and friends or with a group you belong to. Remember our canals and rivers are not safe places to swim.



Walking a dog

Fishing\*

Mooring a boat

Canoeing\*



### Top TIP



If you are visiting a canal or river, never go alone. Always visit with a friend or an adult you know so there is someone to help if you get into trouble.

### Next Step → → → →

Can you create a code to help keep everyone safe? Think of rules that will help all the people using our canals and rivers in different ways to enjoy being on and around the water together, safely.

\*Only with a license



Share your creations and ideas with us  
**on social media #LifesBetterByWater**





## Waterside Safety Challenge

Can you spot at least 10 different hazards in this picture? How many can you find in total?



### Top TIP



Many of the hazards around water are things you cannot see. Think about things that might be under the water when looking for hazards.

### Next Step → → → →

Design a poster to tell people about the hidden dangers in and around water.

Different types of water may present different dangers. Our tip is to choose one type of water, eg canal, river, reservoir or lake, and identify the key dangers you want to highlight.



# SAFE

Remember the SAFE message.  
**Stay Away From the Edge**