

Prince Edward Island – March 2026

Understanding drowning: The importance of Accurate terminology

Defining drowning and related terms

Various terms such as near drowning, secondary drowning, dry drowning, struggler, and DNS frequently appear in media, training sessions, and everyday discussions surrounding incidents of drowning. Each term serves to describe specific circumstances related to drowning, and it is crucial to understand their precise definitions for clear communication.

Drowning is defined as the process of experiencing respiratory impairment due to submersion or immersion in liquid. When drowning is fatal, it results in death. In cases of non-fatal drowning, the respiratory impairment is halted before death occurs. Non-fatal drowning incidents can lead to outcomes ranging from complete recovery with no injuries to severe injuries or permanent disability.

Although drowning is most commonly associated with fatalities, non-fatal drownings are much more frequent than drowning deaths each year. Individuals who survive a non-fatal drowning may face significant health challenges, sometimes lasting throughout their lives.

The importance of accurate terminology

Using the correct terminology when discussing drowning is essential for several reasons. It helps prevent misinformation, ensures proper medical diagnosis and treatment, improves data collection and research, and facilitates clear communication among healthcare professionals, emergency responders, and the public.

Inaccurate terms such as “dry drowning” or “near drowning” can be misleading, potentially leading to misdiagnosis, delays in appropriate treatment, and confusion about what constitutes the actual drowning process—which is specifically defined as respiratory impairment resulting from submersion in water.

Preventing misinformation

Employing medically correct terminology reduces unnecessary fear and misunderstanding. For instance, terms like “dry drowning” and “secondary drowning” have caused undue public alarm and increased anxiety, especially among parents, sometimes resulting in unnecessary medical consultations.

Accurate language also provides the public with reliable information about the real risks associated with drowning, emphasizing that drowning is defined by respiratory impairment, rather than by distinctions based on timing or the amount of water involved.

Ensuring proper diagnosis and treatment

Using appropriate terminology allows healthcare providers to assess drowning incidents accurately and deliver suitable treatment, which can minimize unnecessary procedures such as imaging or antibiotics in cases where there are no symptoms.

Standardized medical records and terminology help ensure that individuals who develop symptoms after a drowning incident receive timely and effective diagnosis and care. Furthermore, outdated terms like “near-drowning,” “dry drowning,” and “wet drowning” have been retired from medical usage, as they do not accurately reflect the physiological processes or causes involved in drowning.

Improving data collection and research

Unified terminology increases the integrity of data collected about drowning incidents. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) have adopted standard definitions of drowning to improve the quality and reliability of research in this area.

Consistent use of terminology enables researchers to analyze pooled data more effectively, advancing injury surveillance and supporting the development of robust prevention strategies.

Facilitating clear communication

Standardization of professional language is crucial for all parties involved in drowning prevention, including the public, medical professionals, and advocates. A common understanding of terminology helps ensure a coordinated response across different groups, which is vital for effective intervention and prevention efforts.

First Aid Must Sees

Over the past year, we've had updates and changes related to our First-Aid program. What follows will be a comprehensive breakdown of all the need-to-knows and Must Sees that apply to all First Aid Instructors, First Aid Examiners, First Aid Trainers, Lifesaving Instructors and Lifesaving Trainers.

- Internally, the Lifesaving Society has decided to swap the CPR Level B, which was paired by default with the Emergency First Aid course, with a CPR Level C similar to the Standard First Aid course. This adjustment has been made to respond to market demand and the rising request of Emergency First Aid as a workplace designated course for low-risk work, while maintaining a manageable time slot for the course.
- All courses delivered under the Lifesaving Society's curriculum, including our First Aid Program, must be organized through an Affiliate Member. Individuals are no longer able to set up courses on their own and submit test sheets. For more information on Affiliate Membership, please refer to Section 1 of our [Program Guide](#).
- Our First Aid Program has been realigned with the CSA Z1210-17 standards. Changes in these standards include shifts in course titles: **Emergency First Aid** is now **Basic First Aid**, and **Standard First Aid** is now **Intermediate First Aid**. The content of these courses has not been significantly impacted; rather, the way the courses are delivered has changed.

New Prestan Ultralite 12-Pack

Transport a complete classroom of CPR Training Manikins in one complete package. Easy setup, lightweight and convenient. Training on-the-go!



Order through

**Lifeguard
Depot.com**[®]

LifeguardDepot.com is the online store of the Lifesaving Society. All proceeds from LifeguardDepot.com support drowning prevention and the development of young leaders through Lifesaving Sport.

Tips for helping crying students in swimming lessons

As a swim instructor, you may have students who are a little nervous, scared, or just don't feel like swimming. Children have big emotions and can express that through crying. Building comfortable relationships with your students and helping them build comfort around water is important, but it takes time. Here are some tips you can use to help dry those tears:

At the beginning of class

- Have a chest of safe, water-friendly toys and allow everyone to choose a toy to take into the water with them.
- Take a few extra minutes to get comfortable with anyone showing apprehension. Your head instructor can get started with the students who are ready to go. Once you get in the water, you can take over with the rest of your students.
- Ask your student if they want to choose a game to be played during class time.
- Use songs or games as icebreakers. Students can learn each other's names and get to know the instructor better.

During the class

- Redirect your student's attention to something they like: a different skill, a toy, or a game with aim.
- Give them a choice for the next skill. "Do you want to do back floats first or kicking on your back?"

- Call over your head instructor for extra supervision and support.
- Use volunteers or assistant instructors to engage 1-on-1 with the student with the intention of them joining the rest of the class afterward.
- Use lots of games to help make lessons engaging.
- Use a different theme each week (superheroes, tea parties, animal jungle...) to make lessons fun.
- If your student likes a particular toy, have that toy available to use as a reward when they complete a skill.

At the end of class

- Have a conversation with the parent/guardian(s). Figure out if this is a normal reaction for the student when they go swimming. Encourage practising bubbles, putting their face in the water, or practising yellow-light flutter kicks, etc. in the tub at home. Work with the parent/guardian(s) on rewards or strategies to keep the student engaged.
- If possible, suggest recreational/public/free swim drop-in programming to give the student more exposure to the water outside swim lessons.
- Leave a note for yourself and/or your Deck Supervisor regarding how the week went so you can track progress over time.

With these tips and with the support of your team, you'll be able to navigate any emotions that come your way and help your students build a love of swimming.



Uniforms designed by lifeguards for lifeguards!

High-visibility lifeguard uniforms in distinctive red and yellow – international lifeguard colours. Singlets, T-shirts or long-sleeved shirts, shorts and hats.

Durable, lightweight fabric. Superior comfort and fit. Quick drying. UV protection. Available exclusively from the Lifesaving Society.

Order online at LifeguardDepot.com or call 1-844-647-7033. Custom orders available.

Lifeguard Depot.com®

Reach for this effective stretching routine

It is always ideal to stretch before you do any physical activity. A good stretching routine will help your flexibility and swimming ability in the pool. Here are 5 easy stretches you can do at home or on the pool deck:

1. **Arm Circles** – Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Swing your arms in circles forward for 30 seconds and then backward for 30 seconds. This increases shoulder mobility.
2. **Wall Chest Stretch** – Stretch out your arm at shoulder height against a wall. Twist your body away from your arm and lean forward gently until you feel the stretch in your chest. Hold this for 30 seconds. Switch arms and repeat on the other side for 30 seconds. This loosens chest muscles to help with arm propulsion.
3. **Standing Quad Stretch** – Standing on one leg, grab the opposite ankle behind you and pull your heel toward your glutes. Try to keep your knees close to each other. Repeat each side for 30 seconds to loosen quad muscles and help with kicks.
4. **Touch your toes** – You can do this stretch either sitting or standing. With feet together and legs straight, bend at the hips and gently reach both arms towards your toes. Repeat in 30-second intervals trying to reach farther each time. This exercise also helps with kicks by loosening hamstring muscles.

5. **Figure Four** – Lying on your back, bend both knees keeping your feet flat on the floor. Lift one leg to place that ankle on the opposite knee. Reach your hands to grasp the back of the leg that's touching the floor. Gently pull that leg toward your chest, with your foot now rising up, and feel the stretch. Repeat on each side for 30 seconds to loosen glutes and hip flexors.

Doesn't that feel good? Now you're ready to hit the water!

P.S. Instructors, Examiners and Trainers: encourage your candidates to stretch before their physical items to ensure their best performance!

OFFICE CLOSED FOR EASTER

Happy Easter! The Lifesaving Society's office will close Friday, April 3 and Monday, April 6 for Easter weekend. We reopen Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 a.m.

red rescue

This innovative new inflatable board is compact enough to fit in a backpack, yet strong enough to withstand any challenge in the water.

Save lives, save space, save money.

Order online from LifeguardDepot.com or call 1-844-647-7033.

Lifeguard Depot.com[®]

