



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

For immediate release

## PARENTS LEARN TO BE WATER SMART® DURING NATIONAL DROWNING PREVENTION WEEK

**Toronto, ON – July 17, 2023:** In 96 per cent of drowning deaths in children under five, supervision was absent or distracted. Now, more than ever, parents need to be Water Smart®. Drowning deaths and near-drownings are preventable when caregivers are informed and take the essential steps to avoid injury.

This year, during National Drowning Prevention Week (July 16–22), the Lifesaving Society is launching a new campaign to teach parents how to be Water Smart. The **Water Smart Parents** campaign aims to empower parents and others responsible for children to have fun and make memories while being safe around water.

The newly launched website [watersmartparents.ca](https://watersmartparents.ca) provides:

- A quiz for parents to test how much they know about being Water Smart
- Specific, actionable safety advice that anyone can use to keep their family safe – anytime and anywhere – including:
  - Water sports activities such as waterskiing, tubing and wind surfing
  - Vacation tips at the cottage or at a pool party
  - Seasonal advice based on weather conditions

### Advice for parents from our partners

To raise awareness and provide expert advice in a variety of areas, the Lifesaving Society has partnered with the following organizations:

- Ontario Provincial Police
- Toronto Police Marine Unit
- MADD Canada
- Parachute Canada
- City of Toronto
- Lifesaving Society affiliates and supporters

### Quotes

#### Lifesaving Society Ontario

“Our goal this National Drowning Prevention Week is to create safer, happier families,” says Lifesaving Society Ontario’s Corporate Communications Manager Stephanie Bakalar, “We want to give parents real-world advice and tools they can use to be safe around water – anytime, anywhere.”

### **Ontario Provincial Police**

“When enjoying the lakes and rivers of Ontario expect the unexpected. No matter what your age, your swimming ability, or your proximity from shore, always wear a lifejacket when out on the water. It could save your life,” says OPP Sgt. Dave Moffatt.

### **Canadian Safe Boating Council**

“The whole family needs to be prepared for any unexpected situation when they go boating including wearing properly fitted lifejackets for all family members and ensuring that their boat has all the required safety gear and sufficient fuel, says Barbara Byers, spokesperson for the Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC).”

### **MADD Canada**

“Impaired boating IS impaired driving,” says MADD Canada National President Jaymie-Lyne Hancock. “It is just as dangerous and illegal as driving a car impaired, and it can result in the same charges, fines and penalties. Even worse, you could hurt yourself or someone else. Let’s keep lakes and waterways safe this summer by putting the alcohol or cannabis away until you’re docked for the day.”

### **Parachute Canada**

“Play and activity is important for children, including swimming, but children don’t often understand the dangers of water. We recommend layers of protection: supervision, wearing a life jacket/PFD in and around water, restricting access by a four-sided pool fence with a self-closing and latching gate, swimming lessons for both parents and kids, and training for parents in CPR/first aid,” says Pamela Fuselli, President and CEO of Parachute, Canada’s national charity dedicated to injury prevention. “We cover this and more in a recent episode from our podcast Popping the Bubble Wrap, Water Safety? Don’t Wing It!”

*Continued...*

### **About the Lifesaving Society**

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart public education, drowning research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. We are a national volunteer organization and registered charity composed of ten provincial/territorial branches, tens of thousands of individual members, and over 4,000 affiliated swimming pools, waterfronts, schools and clubs. The Lifesaving Society is a leader and partner in the delivery of water safety education throughout Canada and around the world.

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