

# Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign 2020

Week 8 of 16



## Water Safety

*Swimming is one of the most popular summer activities. When the temperature rises, a dip is a great way to cool off and have fun. Follow the below safety tips so you and your family can stay safe around water.*

### Pool Safety

- Learn to swim and avoid alcohol.
- Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child. Your children are your responsibility to supervise; don't depend on the Lifeguard.
- Avoid distractions when supervising children around water. Stay within arm's reach of young children and inexperienced swimmers. If a child is missing, check the water and bottom of the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Establish rules for your family and enforce them without fail. For example, set limits based on each person's ability, do not let anyone play around drains and suction fittings, and do not allow swimmers to hyperventilate before swimming under water or have breath-holding contests.
- Set time limits and take breaks. After 45 minutes in the pool, warm up in the sun, go to the bathroom, have a small snack and some water, and reapply sunscreen.
- Know how to use rescue equipment and have a way of contacting help.



### Open Water Safety

- Learn to swim and avoid alcohol.
- Open water is much colder than a pool, so don't swim out too far. You may be too cold and tired to swim back. Instead, swim parallel to the shore and take frequent breaks.
- Stay clear of boats, piers, or breakwaters. Watch for rip currents.
- Don't dive or jump into unknown water.
- Don't dive or jump from anything higher than 6 feet above the surface.
- Don't swim at closed beaches or coastal areas. If posted, don't swim in that location.
- Stay away from coastal areas during and after typhoons, storms, and other inclement weather.



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5101.1A 'Recreational Open Water Activities' provides guidance which applies to SOFA status personnel throughout Japan.

## Lessons Learned

*Learn from those who have gone before you. Following are samples of mishap narratives from the Naval Safety Center.*

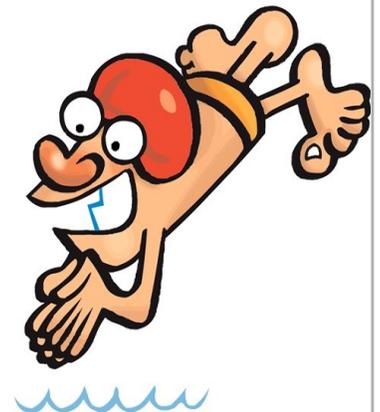


A Sailor was a passenger on a boat. While a fast ship, with a good crew, is a good thing (see *note from John Paul Jones*), a fast boat filled with the unwise isn't. In this case, the boat operator was traveling at approximately 40 miles per hour, at night, like a James Bond boat-chase scene (*there are many, so imagine your favorite*) when he struck a channel marker (*basically, a telephone pole with a light and wooden marker on it.*) The Sailor said a contributing factor to the accident was passengers blocking the operator's view. That's the extent of the report other than the Sailor was wearing a life jacket (*good*) and alcohol may have been a factor (*bad*). A report from the local Coast Guard on a boat hitting a channel marker in the same location, at the same time, on the same day, filled in some of the blanks. The operator was not a military member and was cited for boating under the influence, gross negligence, and an insufficient number of life jackets. The local authorities arrested him. Of eight people on board, two were injured and transported to a local hospital, while one was ejected from the boat and recovered by the Coast Guard without injury. — *There are several lessons here: Do not boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol; Always wear your lifejacket (and have enough for everyone); Choose your friends wisely; and Don't let others drive drunk.*

A Marine was going for an evening swim in the apartment pool. He misjudged the depth when diving into the pool and his head made contact with the pool bottom (the slope from the deep end to the shallow end). While the Marine initially felt fine after the head bump, he felt discomfort in his neck the following day and headed to the hospital where he received a CT scan and a chest X-ray. Diagnosis: Closed Head Injury (CHI), earning him two days SIQ. — *How many times have we heard of these types of incidents? Too many! Our Marine is fortunate to only have a couple days of SIQ. Be sure before you dive. Remember the saying, "Feet first, first time."*

A Sailor was swimming at the beach with his family when his spouse got caught in a heavy current around a jetty. During his attempt to rescue her (*and he did; well done!*), he suffered lacerations and abrasions to both his legs. His visit to the emergency room also revealed a concussion. — *There's just no way to find the humor in this one. This Sailor should be lauded for rescuing his spouse from the current. Some ORM earlier in the day, however, may have led them to a safer area to swim. Currents, including rip currents, can turn deadly in a hurry. Risk Management helps protect you (and your family) at home too.*

A Sailor jumped off a pontoon boat into waist-deep water, landing on a submerged object (*then came the pain*). This Sailor's leap of faith ended with a trip to the emergency room, which revealed fractures to his left foot, tibia and fibula. After surgery, the Sailor lost three workdays, followed by 83 days on light duty. — *It's good he remembered the "Feet first" rule, or that could've been a broken neck. Murky water can carry more risk than a pool, so exercise ORM and know what you are getting into, literally.*





*Three Falls, Yasaka Dam, Otake River, and Hamada Beach are popular recreational areas. However, people have been injured and killed in these places so it is important to follow local rules and make appropriate risk decisions.*

## **Local Waters**

- **Learn to swim and avoid alcohol.**
- Do not swim in the rivers during or after rains. Rivers are known to swell quickly from rain-falls. Even if the water looks calm on the surface, underlying currents can be very strong.
- Be familiar with the waters before you go in. Don't dive or jump without checking for underwater hazards first. Never jump from anything higher than 6 feet.
- Stay out of deep areas and outgoing tides at the beach. If you get caught in a rip current swim to the side until you're out of the current, then swim for the shore.
- Always swim with a buddy, never alone.
- Have a way of contacting help if needed.

*A high number of water-related mishaps involving Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) personnel have occurred in open water in and around Okinawa and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni.*

**Questions? Contact the MCAS Iwakuni Station Safety Center.**

*A significant percentage of these mishaps caused fatalities, and the remainder required military and/or host nation emergency rescues.*

## **Boating**

- **Learn to swim and don't drink alcohol.**
- Wear a life jacket.
- Make sure you have a buddy with you but tell someone where you're going also. Let them know when you'll be back and check in with them when you do.
- Know the boat and the waters you're in. Check for emergency and communication equipment in the boat and make sure all passengers know how to use the equipment. Keep cellphones in a waterproof case or bag.



- Check the forecast before launching.
- Never overload the boat and distribute weight evenly. Stay seated as much as possible when in the boat.
- Travel at slower speeds in shallow waters and around other boats and obstacles.

## **Visit these sites for more information**

- [navalsafetycenter.navy.mil](http://navalsafetycenter.navy.mil)
- [mccsiwakuni.com](http://mccsiwakuni.com).
- [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)

