

WATER RESCUE PROCEDURE

If you see someone bobbing vertically in the water and unable to call for help, act quickly to determine whether the person is drowning and rescue him or her immediately. Drowning happens in a matter of minutes; if there's no lifesaving guard around you'll have to perform the rescue yourself. If you're prepared, you'll be able to make a real difference in someone else's life, and potentially save them if you know the right things

1. Assess the Situation – Determine if the person is drowning

Active drowning victims are conscious but are struggling and unable to call for help. They also may be thrashing their arms. It is very important for you to recognize these signs early as people will become submerged in 20 to 60 seconds.

- An active drowning victim will bob in and out of the water with his or her mouth being just above the surface of the water. The person is not making forward progress either.
- Someone who looks as though they're having trouble, but isn't yelling for help, may not have enough oxygen to call out.

2. Call for assistance

No matter your experience or training, having others assist you is a good idea;

- Yell to others that someone is drowning;
- Use your radio to call for assistance;
- Call emergency services immediately, **especially if the person is floating face-down:**

3. Decide which rescue method to use

Decide which rescue method to use. Remain calm and figure out how you can best rescue the person based on the location and type of body of water the person is in. Find a flotation device if you can. If the person is close, use a reach method. If the person is further away, use an ocean rescue method

- It may take a few seconds to get the person's attention. Stay calm and continue to talk to them.
- If you have one available, a shepherd's crook can reach someone beyond the range of a reaching assist in a pool or lake.
- Use a ring buoy or other easy to throw rescue device to reach a victim further away from the shore; this is also used in an ocean rescue.
- Dive into the water and swim to the victim as a last resort, when the victim is out of reach.

4. Proceed with rescue – stay calm and focused

People who panic are more likely to make mistakes and may also stress out the victim. Call to the victim that you're coming to his or her aid.

Method 1

Lie face down on the edge of the pool or dock. Spread your legs to make sure that you are in a stable position. Never extend yourself to the point where you lose your balance. Reach out to the person and yell, "Grab my hand/arm/paddle!" You may have to yell multiple times before the person hears or sees you. Speak in a voice that is loud, clear and confident.

- This type of rescue is only helpful if the drowning victim is within reach of the side of the pool, pier, or close to the shore.
- Do not attempt to perform a reaching assist while standing. This puts you in a precarious position, and you are more likely to fall into the water.
- Reach out your dominant hand, since you'll be using your strength to pull the victim to safety.
- Grab an object you can use to extend your reach if the person is a little too far for your arm to reach. Almost anything that can add a few feet to your reach can help; a boat paddle or a rope are also effective if the person is able to grab them.
- Pull the person safely out of the water and gently help him or her get onto dry ground.

Method 2

Locate the shepherd's crook. This is a long metal pole with a hook on the end that can be used either as a handle for the victim to grab, or as a device to wrap around the victim in the event that the victim is unable to hold onto it himself. Many pools and outdoor swimming areas are stocked with this tool.

- Warn other people on the deck to stand away from the end of the stick in case it hits them. You don't want them to interfere with the rescue.
- Stand slightly away from the edge of the deck. Brace your feet in case the victim pulls on the pole. Be sure you're far enough back that you don't risk getting pulled into the water.
- Hold the hook where the drowning person can reach it, and call to the victim to grab the hook.
- If the person is unable to grab it, dip the hooked part further into the water and wrap it around the person's torso, just below his or her armpits.
- Make sure the hook is not near the person's neck, since this could lead to injury.
- Aim carefully, as it is often difficult to see.
- You will feel a sharp tug when the person finds the crook.

Pull the person to safety. Verify that the person has grasped the object before you begin to pull him or her in.

- Slowly and carefully pull the victim to the side until he or she is close enough for you to use a reaching assist to pull him to the wall.
- Lie down and make sure you are stable before performing the reaching assist.

Method 3

Find a floating aid. A floating aid with a line attached is ideal because the line can help you pull the victim in. A ring buoy, life jacket, and floating cushions are often found at lifeguard stations at pools and outdoor swimming areas. Boats are also equipped with ring buoys, so use this rescue if the incident occurs while you're out in the middle of a body of water.

- Toss the float so that it lands within reach of the victim, but do not strike the victim directly. Take the wind and the current of the water into consideration before you throw.
- Let the victim know that you are about to throw the aid, and that he or she needs to grab the aid.
- A good goal is to throw the ring just past the victim, then pull it to him or her with the rope.
- If you miss the victim or he or she is unable to grab the aid, pull the line back or try throwing another device.
- If repeated attempts are unsuccessful, you may need to try another method or swim to push the device closer to the victim.

Try throwing a line. An unweighted rope can also be used to rescue a victim. Loosely coil the rope or line in your non-throwing hand by tying a small loop on one end and placing your wrist in the loop. Use an underhand motion to throw the ring, and allow the rope to uncoil freely from your non-throwing hand. Step on the end of the rope so that you do not accidentally throw the ring away.

- Aim for the victim's shoulder when throwing a line.

- Once the victim grabs the line, drops the coil, and begin to slowly pull the line until the victim has reached the side or is able to stand in shallow water.