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FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

# How to stay safe in and around water

Follow and share our top tips to keep yourself (and others) safe around the coast and rivers, lakes, and canals.

- Never leave children unattended near water.
- Know your location, so if you need to dial 999 you know exactly where you are if you or someone else gets into trouble. We recommend you use the [What3Words app](#) to help locate yourself and others.
- Be aware of hidden dangers. Water might look calm on the surface but strong undercurrents can pull even the strongest of swimmers under. Underwater plants can also be a drowning hazard if you get stuck.
- Never walk or play on frozen water.
- Be careful of swimming in cold water, as it could affect your ability to swim.
- Try to only swim where there are lifeguards present. Swimming in quarries, lakes, reservoirs, and canals is really dangerous.
- Pay attention to warning signs and learn what the different coloured flags at the beach mean.
- Beware of rip currents. If you're ever caught in one, swim parallel to the shore.
- If you find yourself in trouble, try to move to a floating position. Lie on your back and spread out your arms and legs, tilt your head up and out of the water and shout for help. If you can, try and raise your arm to make people aware.
- Stay out of the water if you have been drinking alcohol.

# What to do if someone falls into the water

Never go into the water to try to save someone. You could experience cold water shock which will leave you unable to help, even if you're a strong swimmer.

1. Call 999 immediately. If you're near the coast, ask for a coastguard. If you are inland, ask for the fire, and ambulance services.
2. Tell the emergency services where you are. You can use your phone, but if you don't have one or you can't access location tools then try looking for landmarks or signs that could help the services find you. We recommend downloading the **What3Words app** to help with pinpointing your location.
3. If the person can swim, shout "swim to me!" The water can be disorientating, but this could help give them a focus. Keep instructions loud, clear and consistent.
4. Look for lifebelts or throw bags you can use. Read about **how to use a throwline**.
5. If there isn't any lifesaving equipment, look for other things that could help them stay afloat, such as a ball. You can even use a scarf or long stick to help pull someone in. If you do this, lie on the ground so your entire body is safely on the edge and reach out with your arm. Don't stand up or lean over the water, as you might get pulled in.

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