

# **PLAY IT SAFE BY THE WATER**

2011/2012  
VICTORIAN WATER  
SAFETY GUIDE

KEEPING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY  
SAFE IN, ON AND AROUND WATER.

[www.watersafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.watersafety.vic.gov.au)



**PLAY IT SAFE**  
BY THE WATER

# WATER SAFETY SIGNS

## LOOK FOR AND FOLLOW ADVICE OF SAFETY SIGNS

Safety of the area or venue must be reviewed as part of your overall decision regarding the suitability of that area or venue for water activities. Safety signage is provided at many aquatic environments and facilities. This signage can include information on regulatory provisions, hazard warnings, prohibition details and emergency procedures. Look out for water safety signs when you visit an aquatic location and take some time to read them.

### WARNING SIGNS



strong current



submerged objects



drop off

### REGULATION SIGNS



PWCs prohibited



no diving



no fishing

### INFORMATION SIGNS



life jackets



boat ramp



surfboard riding



# PLAY IT SAFE BY THE WATER

The Play it Safe by the Water campaign actively works towards increasing community awareness of water safety.

Remember the following when enjoying Victoria's wonderful coastline, lakes, river systems, public and home swimming pools:

## KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT

There are different safety rules for beaches, rivers, lakes and public or private swimming pools. Be aware of the local water environment and weather conditions before entering the water.

## BEHAVE SAFELY

Obey all water safety signs, don't drink alcohol while recreating around water, particularly while in charge of a boat and make sure someone is looking out for you.

## LEARN TO SWIM

Being able to swim is an essential water safety and life skill. Everybody, especially school-age children, should be taught to swim and how to stay afloat. Being able to swim also opens up a vast range of sport, leisure, health and recreational experiences. If you get into trouble in the water, thrown from a boat or swept out to sea, there are a number of basic skills to help you survive, such as staying calm, remaining with your boat or using a buoyant object to stay afloat.



# POOL SAFETY



A home or public pool can be a great place to swim. Remember never take your eyes off children in and around the pool. Children must be actively supervised around water. Active supervision means that the child is constantly watched by an adult and within arm's reach.

## HOME POOLS

### Safety barriers – a legal requirement

Victorian law requires swimming pools or spas on private residential properties to have suitable safety barriers to restrict access to the pool or spa. Every private swimming pool or spa capable of containing a depth of water exceeding 300mm must have a childproof safety barrier. A building permit is also required prior to installing the barrier. Safety barriers are no substitute for adult supervision of toddlers and children who are playing in or near swimming pools or spas. Barriers are required for:

- ▶ In-ground pools
- ▶ Spas or hot tubs
- ▶ Inflatable pools
- ▶ Above-ground pools
- ▶ Indoor swimming pools
- ▶ Bathing and wading pools

To ensure that your safety barrier remains effective:

- ▶ Fit and maintain correct safety measures to gates, doors and windows, such as self-closing / self-latching devices or flyscreens
- ▶ Make sure you remove any items such as chairs, boxes, pool pumps or BBQs that could be used to climb the barrier to access the pool.

For further information, contact your local council or the Building Commission on 1300 815 127 or visit

[www.buildingcommission.com.au](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au)



## PUBLIC POOLS

Victorians have access to over 300 public pools across the state. With dedicated lifeguards and supervision programs in place, these venues are some of the safest places for families to enjoy cooling off over summer. Many also have indoor facilities, making it possible to have fun in the water year round.

It is important to remember that even though lifeguards are on patrol, it is essential for you to actively supervise your own children. Watch Around Water is a structured supervision program for public aquatic facilities to educate the public about adequate supervision and to encourage parents and guardians to take on this responsibility when visiting a public aquatic facility.

To find out where your nearest Watch Around Water facility is located, please visit [www.aquaticsandrecreation.org.au/watcharoundwater](http://www.aquaticsandrecreation.org.au/watcharoundwater)

## POOL SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Supervision means constant visual contact, not the occasional glance. Even at a public pool, you should never take your eyes off children in the water and if they are under 5 you must be within arm's reach.
- ▶ If you leave the pool or water area, even for a moment, take the children with you.
- ▶ A swimming pool fence is not a substitute for supervision.
- ▶ Display a resuscitation chart on your pool fence.
- ▶ Familiarise children with water by taking them to learn to swim lessons, run by accredited teachers, at the local pool. Visit [www.swimandsurvive.com.au](http://www.swimandsurvive.com.au) to find accredited programs.
- ▶ Empty paddling pools and inflatable pools when not in use.
- ▶ Empty baths, basins, sinks, buckets and troughs immediately after use.

# INLAND WATERWAYS

Victoria is home to many inland waterways, including rivers, creeks, lakes and dams. Be safe when diving into water. Many people drown in Victoria's rivers, lakes and dams or are paralysed after diving into shallow water. The best way to check it's OK to swim is to ask someone who knows the area, such as a local shopkeeper, caravan park owner or park ranger.

## LAKE SAFETY

- ▶ Lakes may look calm but are often very dangerous. Strong winds can create choppy conditions making it dangerous for swimming and boating.
- ▶ Strong currents are likely wherever a river enters a lake, and the lake bed may be soft and uneven where silt has been deposited.
- ▶ Cold water in lakes can be deadly. It is often much colder beneath the surface than you think.
- ▶ Suddenly submerging into cold water can cause distress, shock and lack of mobility.
- ▶ If you feel cold, get out of the water immediately.



## RIVER SAFETY

- ▶ Never swim in fast-flowing water. Check the speed first by throwing in a twig to see how fast it travels.
- ▶ If you are caught in a current, float on your back and travel downstream, feet first, to protect your head from impact with any objects.
- ▶ Beware of submerged objects. Trees, branches, rocks and discarded rubbish can be very dangerous.
- ▶ Be careful not to stand near the edge of overhanging river banks, which can crumble away. Conditions can change rapidly due to heavy rainfall or the release of water from storage areas. Remember that what is safe in the morning can be dangerous by the afternoon.
- ▶ Recent flooding has changed water conditions in many areas. Many waterways are higher than they have been in recent years. Check with a local about changed conditions before entering the water.
- ▶ Watch out for soft or uneven river beds, which can cause difficulties for waders or swimmers.



# BEACH SAFETY

## ALWAYS SWIM BETWEEN THE RED AND YELLOW FLAGS

Victoria has a wonderful coastline, with 67 of the state's most popular beaches patrolled by lifesavers during the summer months. Remember any beach can be dangerous. Beach-goers should be careful and always swim between the red and yellow flags, which indicate this section of the beach is patrolled by lifesavers. When swimming between the red and yellow flags, always look back to the beach to check you are still between the flags. If you choose to swim outside these flags, you could be moving into a more dangerous location.

## WHAT IS A PATROLLED BEACH?

Patrolled beaches are supervised by trained lifesavers and are identified by red and yellow flags. See pages 8 and 9 for locations of these patrolled beaches. It is important to remember that even if lifesavers are on patrol, it is essential for you to actively supervise your own children.

## WHAT IF A BEACH IS NOT PATROLLED?

As beaches are not patrolled every day of the year, please remember to:

- ▶ Check it's OK to swim by assessing the conditions or checking with a local
- ▶ Never swim alone
- ▶ Read and obey the water safety signs.



# AVOID RIP CURRENTS BY ALWAYS SWIMMING BETWEEN THE RED AND YELLOW FLAGS.

## WHAT IS A RIP?

A rip is a strong water current running out to sea from a beach. Rips can easily sweep swimmers out to sea from shallow water, sometimes several hundred metres offshore. Rips occur at all beach locations, including bays. Common signs of a rip are:

- ▶ murky brown water caused by sand and seaweed being stirred up off the sea bed
- ▶ foam on the surface extending beyond the break
- ▶ waves breaking on both sides of the rip but not inside the rip (the rip may seem calm and inviting)
- ▶ water that appears dark, indicating deeper water
- ▶ debris floating out to sea.

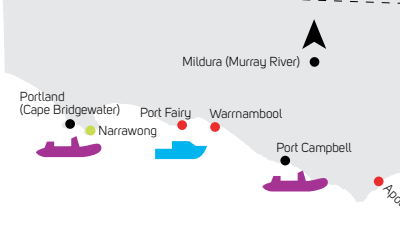
Lifesavers constantly monitor beach conditions and will set up the flags at the safest section of the beach for swimming.

If you do get caught in a rip:

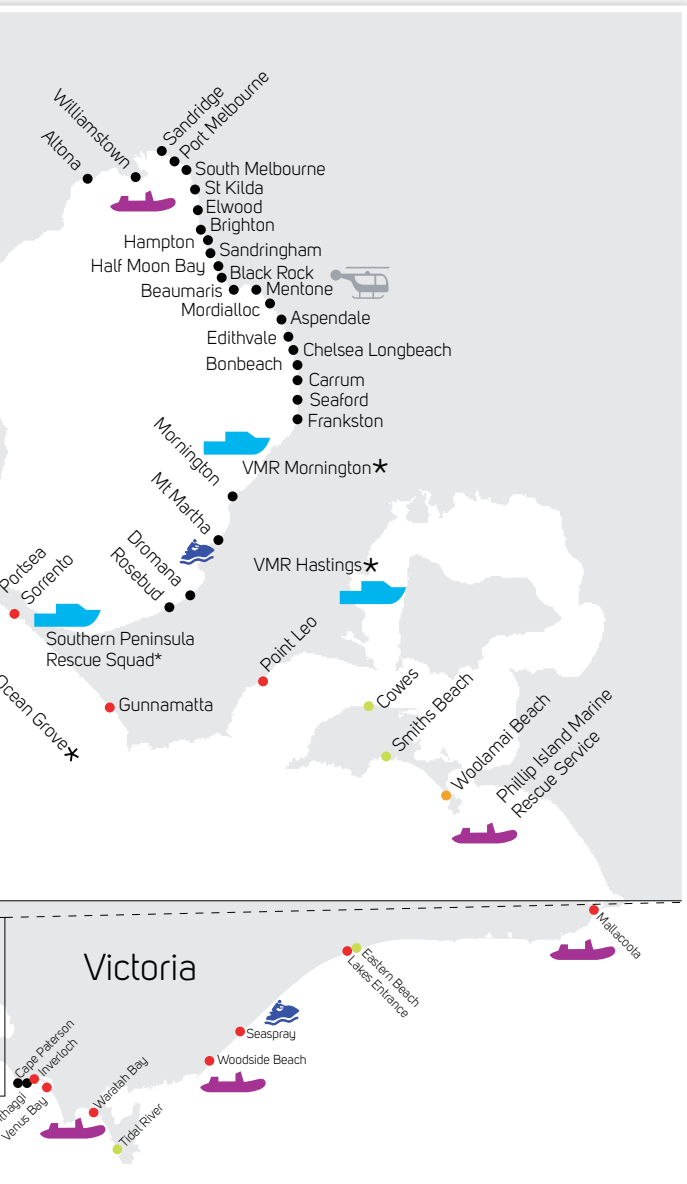
- ▶ Stay calm, float and attract attention for assistance.
- ▶ Don't try to swim to shore against the rip current – instead, slowly swim parallel to the beach, towards the breaking waves, then use these waves to return to the shoreline.
- ▶ If you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by facing the shore, raising your arm and staying calm – float to conserve your energy and call for assistance.



- 7 day a week service between mid November to end of February and Weekend and Public Holidays Patrols to Easter Monday.
- 7 day a week service between mid December to mid February and weekend and Public Holidays patrols from last weekend in November to Easter Monday.
- 7 day a week service between 26th December to mid February and weekend and Public Holidays patrols from last weekend in November to Easter Monday.
- Weekend and Public Holidays Patrols (normally last weekend in November to Easter Monday) and Christmas School Holiday 7 day a week service.
- Christmas School Holidays 7 day a week service.
- Weekend and Public Holidays Patrols (normally last weekend in November to Easter Monday).
- 24hr Marine Search and Rescue Marine Offshore Service.
- 24hr Marine Search and Rescue Rigid Inflatable Offshore Service.
- Rescue water craft.
- ★ Undergoing affiliation to LSV.



# PATROLLED BEACHES IN VICTORIA



## WHEN ARE THE BEACHES IN VICTORIA PATROLLED?

Life Saving Victoria patrols operate when the red and yellow flags are displayed by lifesavers. For further information and patrol dates, visit

[www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au](http://www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au)

# SURFING AND BODYBOARDING



## WHERE CAN I GO SURFING?

At a patrolled beach all surfers must surf outside the black and white quartered flags. These flags are sometimes used to create a buffer zone between the swimming area (between the red and yellow flags) and the board riding areas. No surfboards are allowed between the black and white quartered flags. Many of the best surf spots are found at beaches that are not patrolled, but if you are going to surf there, never surf alone! Surfers must take responsibility for their own and others' safety.

## SURFING & BODYBOARDING SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Always surf or bodyboard with a friend.
- ▶ Assess the conditions thoroughly prior to entering the surf.
- ▶ Continue to assess the conditions as they can suddenly change.
- ▶ When surfing or bodyboarding use the correct equipment – leg rope and nose guard for surfing, wrist strap and fins for bodyboarding.
- ▶ If you get into trouble, stay on your surfboard or bodyboard; it will keep you afloat.
- ▶ If you are caught in a rip, stay calm, stay with your board and paddle parallel to the beach, then catch a broken wave back to shore.
- ▶ Be aware of other people in the water and don't surf or bodyboard too close to swimmers.
- ▶ Beginner surfers should always start with a lesson from a Surfing Victoria affiliated surf school, which can be found at [www.surfindustralia.com](http://www.surfindustralia.com)

Anglers in Victoria enjoy diverse recreational fishing opportunities ranging from our freshwater lakes and rivers to saltwater fishing in our bays, inlets and oceans.

## RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENCE

Unless you are exempt, a Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) is required when taking, or attempting to take, any species of fish by any method including line fishing, bait collection, gathering shellfish, yabby fishing, prawning and spear fishing. A RFL covers all forms of recreational fishing in all of Victoria's marine, estuarine and freshwaters. For more information go to [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fisheries)

## ROCK FISHING

Rock fishing is a popular pastime for many Victorian anglers, however, it can be extremely dangerous, and has been described as one of the most dangerous sports in Australia. Most rock fishing deaths are caused by anglers being swept off rocks. Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when rock fishing.

## SAFETY TIPS WHEN FISHING:

- ▶ Always tell friends or family of your plans, ensure they know where you are going and when you will be returning.
- ▶ Seek out local advice about tidal behaviour and accessibility of your intended fishing spot.
- ▶ Never fish alone. One person should watch the sea at all times as conditions can change dramatically in a short time.
- ▶ Check water and weather conditions before you go.
- ▶ Wear a life jacket and carry safety gear and a first-aid kit.
- ▶ Don't wear waders when rock or ledge fishing – wear light clothing that will allow you to swim easily if you are washed in.
- ▶ Wear appropriate footwear with non-slip soles.
- ▶ Observe first and fish later. Take time to judge your intended spot before fishing to get an idea of tidal and sea conditions and plan access and escape routes.
- ▶ Have an escape plan. If the swell threatens your position, leave immediately.
- ▶ Always obey danger signs and never trust access and escape aids such as ropes and makeshift steps.
- ▶ Never turn your back on the sea.

# BOATING SAFETY

Life jackets save lives. Boating can be a great way to enjoy Victoria's coastline, lakes and river systems. A personal flotation device (PFD) is essential for safe boating.

## WHEN DO I NEED TO WEAR A PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD)?

PFDs must be worn at all times\* on:

- ▶ Powerboats up to and including 4.8m
- ▶ Off the beach yachts & paddle craft.

\* When in an open area of a vessel which is underway.

PFDs must be worn at times of heightened risk\*\* on:

- ▶ Powerboats greater than 4.8m up to 12m
- ▶ All yachts.

\*\* Heightened risk means:

- ▶ at night
- ▶ boating alone
- ▶ crossing bars
- ▶ high risk of capsize or swamping
- ▶ during a gale, storm, severe thunderstorm or severe weather warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology
- ▶ yachts with no safety barriers, lifelines, safety harnesses or jacklines in use.

## BOAT LICENCE

A Boat Licence is required to operate a powerboat vessel and an appropriate licence endorsement is required to operate a personal water craft, such as a jetski. Operators 12 –16 years of age can apply for a restricted licence, which allows them to operate boats under certain conditions. Boat licences can be obtained by:

1. Completing a recreational power boat operator licence test with VicRoads
2. Completing an approved training course from an approved registered training organisation.

## BOATING SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Before heading out, ensure that your safety equipment is on board the boat and easily accessible. Make a habit of running a regular maintenance check on your boat.
- ▶ Seek up-to-date local knowledge, particularly if you are going boating, as conditions of rivers and lakes may be affected by low water levels.
- ▶ Take extreme caution and operate your vessel at a safe speed.
- ▶ Tree stumps and other submerged objects can present a hazard to the safe operation of boats – particularly those operating at speed. It is the responsibility of the boat operator to operate at a safe speed.
- ▶ Beginner boat owners interested in theory and practical accredited lessons should contact [www.boatingvictoria.com.au](http://www.boatingvictoria.com.au)
- ▶ Children interested in learning to sail and boating water safety should enrol in an accredited junior sailing program. For more information, contact [www.yachtingvictoria.com.au](http://www.yachtingvictoria.com.au)

For more information go to [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au) or call 1800 223 022.

# RESUSCITATION ACTION PLAN (DRSABCD)

## D – DANGERS

### CHECK FOR HAZARDS / RISKS / SAFETY

Remove possible dangers

## R – RESPONSE

### CHECK FOR RESPONSE

Can you hear me? Open your eyes. What's your name?  
Squeeze my hands. Let go.

## S – SEND

### SEND FOR HELP – DIAL 000

## A – AIRWAY

### OPEN THE AIRWAY

Check the airway / Clear if required.

## B – BREATHING

### LOOK, LISTEN AND FEEL FOR BREATHING

UNRESPONSIVE?  
NOT BREATHING NORMALLY?  
**COMMENCE CPR**

## C – CPR

### GIVE 30 CHEST COMPRESSIONS FOLLOWED BY 2 BREATHS. PUSH FIRM, PUSH FAST.

- 5 cycles in 2 minutes.
- Continue CPR until qualified person arrives or normal breathing returns.
- If unwilling/unable to perform rescue breaths, continue chest compressions.



## ADULT

8 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

HEAD TILT; FULL  
COMPRESSIONS: 2 HANDS,  
1/3 OF CHEST DEPTH

## CHILD

1 - 8 YEARS OF AGE

HEAD TILT; FULL  
COMPRESSIONS: 1 OR 2  
HANDS, 1/3 OF CHEST DEPTH

## INFANT

LESS THAN 1 YEAR OF AGE

HEAD TILT; NEUTRAL  
COMPRESSIONS: TWO FINGERS,  
1/3 OF CHEST DEPTH

## D – DEFIBRILLATION

### ATTACH AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND FOLLOW ITS PROMPTS

## FOR DROWNING RELATED EMERGENCIES

- ENSURE YOUR SAFETY IF PERFORMING A RESCUE
  - CHECK AND CLEAR THE AIRWAY WITH THE PERSON ON THEIR SIDE
- IF NOT BREATHING NORMALLY, GIVE TWO RESCUE BREATHS PRIOR TO COMMENCING CPR

# EMERGENCY & OTHER CONTACTS

## EMERGENCY

### Police, Fire or Ambulance DIAL 000

If you have a speech or hearing disability the service can be accessed via the National Relay Service on 106.

### Poisons Information Centre 131 126 (24 hours)

Information and advice if someone is:

- ▶ poisoned, takes an overdose or is given an incorrect medicine or incorrect dose of medicine
- ▶ bitten or stung by a spider, snake, insect, bee, wasp, jellyfish, fish, scorpion, etc.

## WEATHER INFORMATION

### Bureau of Meteorology (03) 9669 4916

1196 for current weather forecasts

[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

### Surf Reports

[www.coastalwatch.com](http://www.coastalwatch.com)

## EPA BEACH REPORT

EPA Beach Report program monitors water quality at 35 Port Phillip Bay beaches. It provides beach water quality so people can make informed decisions about which beach they will visit.

This program operates from 1 December until early March.

### Environment Protection Authority (03) 9695 2722

[www.epa.vic.gov.au/beachreport](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/beachreport)

## ORGANISATIONS

- ▶ Life Saving Victoria (03) 9676 6900
- ▶ Aquatics & Recreation Victoria (03) 9271 3800
- ▶ Transport Safety Victoria (Marine Safety Victoria) 1800 223 022
- ▶ Surfing Victoria (03) 5261 2907
- ▶ Swimming Victoria (03) 9686 5222
- ▶ Yachting Victoria (03) 9597 0066
- ▶ Kidsafe Victoria (03) 9251 7725

The 2011/2012 Water Safety Guide can be downloaded from [www.watersafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.watersafety.vic.gov.au)

All information is a guide only and current at the time of printing, November 2011.

