



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermonters Reminded to Take Precautions Before Swimming or Boating

For Immediate Release: July 8, 2011
Media Contact: Communication Office
Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – Vermont has had several drowning deaths this swim season on recreational waterways, and state officials from the Health Department, Emergency Management and the State Police want to remind all Vermonters that swimming in a natural body of water, or enjoying the day on a boat, can be risky.

Officials advise all Vermonters to learn how to swim, never swim alone, wear a life vest when boating, never leave a child unsupervised around water, and avoid rivers and streams with high water or strong currents.

Between 1997 and 2007, the Vermont Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reported 106 accidents in Vermont that resulted in drowning deaths. About half of all drownings occur in natural water settings such as lakes, rivers, or oceans.

“Tragically, Vermont averages approximately 10 drowning deaths each swim season, and most of these deaths could have been prevented,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “The rescue yesterday of the two swimmers at the Huntington Gorge is a good reminder to take precautions, because it is remarkable how quickly a recreational swim can become a life-and-death situation.”

Drowning is the sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14 years. More than one in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nine out of 10 people who drown in recreational boating accidents were not wearing life jackets. Among children ages 1 to 4 years, most drownings occur in residential swimming pools. Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight less than five minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time.

For more information about safe swimming visit healthvermont.gov, or the [CDC website](http://www.cdc.gov).

Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/VTHealth) and join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VTHealth) for up-to-date news and information.

###

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
||| | [Web Browser](#)

