While swimming holes offer wonderful recreational opportunities, these areas come with additional risks. Smart decision-making, being informed and paying attention to posted warnings can often prevent a tragedy.

**Remember that water is wild**

Heavy rains, floating or lodged debris, or even long periods of heat and drought can change currents, depths and the underwater structure of a wild body of water. ALWAYS use caution when swimming in natural water bodies.

**Avoid dangerous water holes**

In recent years, multiple drownings have occurred at Huntington Gorge, Cobb Brook, Bolton Potholes, Dog’s Head Falls, Saxtons River, Hamilton Falls and New Haven River. Be cautious in these areas.

**Check water and weather conditions**

Swollen rivers and fast-moving currents can create dangerous conditions for days after a heavy rain event. Check the forecast — flash flooding can quickly turn a quiet spot into raging water.

**Observe your surroundings**

Watch the currents and listen for the sound of unusually loud rushing water. Natural waters can have hidden dangers below the surface, like formations that create a suction. Toss in a stick or short branch. If it is swept away or sucked underwater, stay out and don’t take chances.

**Never swim alone**

Natural waters are unpredictable, and accidents can take only an instant. So always bring a buddy, for good company and to keep each other safe.

**Don’t swim above or under waterfalls**

Heavy currents can wash people over falls, with pressure that may keep you down, and undertows can trap swimmers underwater. Avoid swimming above or directly beneath waterfalls.

**Be realistic about your own abilities**

Understand your own limits, and don’t put yourself or others in danger by taking risks. Water is a stronger force than you may think, so use good judgment, swim sober, and be honest with yourself about your own strength and abilities.