

# water sports and activities

Naval Safety Center



# Water mishap statistics

**Only Two mishap reports involved a shark attack**

Of the 78 mishaps reported, **none of them involved alcohol**

5 fatalities were reported over the past 3 years

The top five most reported mishaps involved  
the following activities:

1. Swimming
2. Boating
3. Surfing
4. Jet skiing
5. Snorkeling

# Swimming basics

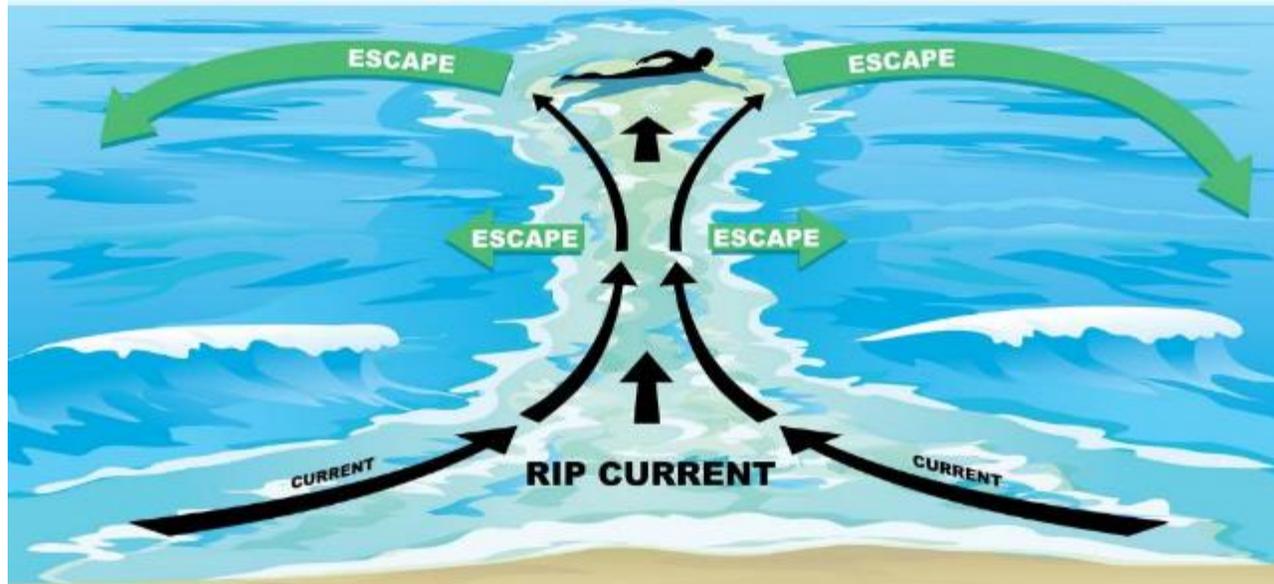
- ✓ Recognize your limitations
- ✓ Swim in safe areas
- ✓ Learn how to handle common water hazards
- ✓ When required, wear a life jacket
- ✓ Learn how to swim, float, or tread water
- ✓ Take a course to learn CPR
- ✓ Do not participate in water activities while using alcohol or drugs



*According to the CDC, the main factors associated with drowning are:*

- Lack of swimming ability
- Lack of barriers
- Lack of supervision
- Location
- Failure to wear life preservers
- Alcohol use
- Seizure disorders

# RIP CURRENTS



Rip currents are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. They typically extend from the shoreline, through the surf zone, and past the line of breaking waves. Rip currents can occur at any beach with breaking waves.

Check for current rip current conditions at the National Weather Service website, or local weather forecast report

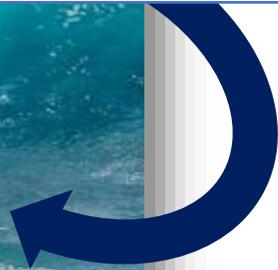
## Tips to get out of a rip current

- ✓ Remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly
- ✓ Never fight against the current
- ✓ Think of it like a treadmill that cannot be turned off, which you need to step to the side of
- ✓ Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim at an angle--away from the current--towards shore
- ✓ If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore
- ✓ If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by waving your arm and yelling for help

# Surfing safety



Plan for A GOOD TIME...



...BUT PREPARE FOR ANYTHING TO HAPPEN

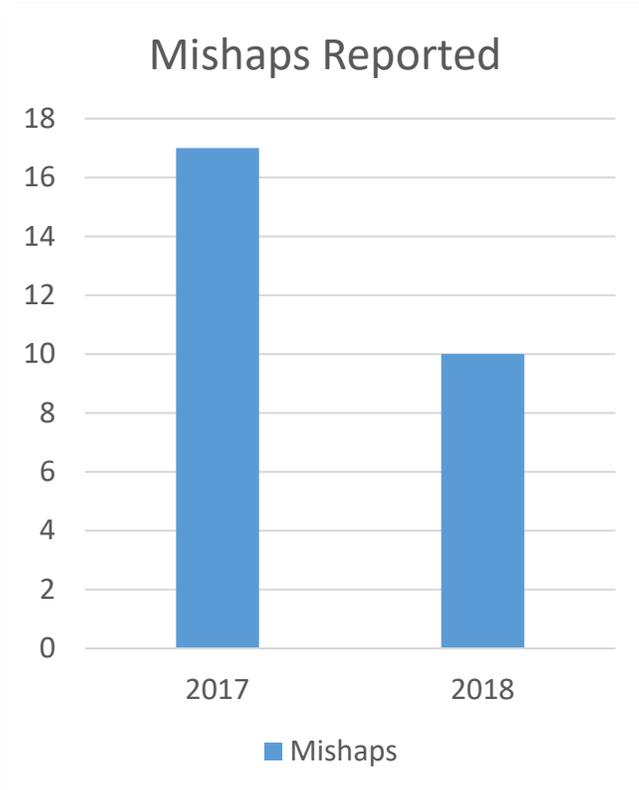


Surfing is inherently dangerous. The very nature of surfing involves its fair share of wipe-outs!

- ✓ Take lessons before attempting on your own
- ✓ Never surf alone
- ✓ Avoid surfing in adverse weather conditions
- ✓ Ensure your leg rope is attached to your ankle and board
- ✓ Check to make sure your fins are properly secured
- ✓ Observe water conditions before entering to ensure it is safe
- ✓ Maintain a high level of situational awareness because waves are relentless
- ✓ Pick a point along the beach to line up with and stay in that general area
- ✓ Always hold on to your board, to prevent it from become a projectile object hurting you or someone else

# Surfing mishaps

A variety of mishaps were reported for injuries ranging from shark bites, and other run-ins with sea creatures, to severe cuts, bruises, and fractures.



The most common trend was hand and wrist injuries. Surfers hurt themselves most when trying to brace for a hard landing.



A service member wiped-out and cut their foot on the surfboard fin. The surfer checked into the emergency room where they received stitches.

# Jet ski safety

Jet Skis are categorized as Class A vessels by the Coast Guard. Therefore all rules and regulations for craft under 16 feet long apply.

- ✓ Take an operator course before use
- ✓ Obey the Rules of the Road
- ✓ Everyone riding on a jet ski should wear a life preserver
- ✓ Drive defensively, resist dangerous stunts or maneuvers
- ✓ Key the ignition safety switch lanyard on your wrist or jacket

How you think your jet ski experience is going to be...



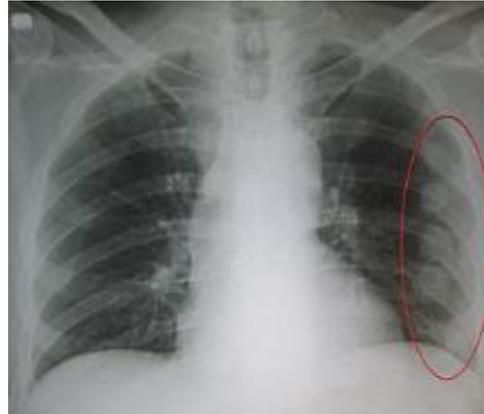
How it turns out when you don't make safe decisions



# Jet ski mishaps in 2018



While riding on a lake, A Sailor suffered non life threatening injuries when they fell off a jet ski. The sailor drove through choppy water which caused them to lose control of the craft. Fortunately, they were wearing a live vest.



Service member fell off a jet ski while riding as a passenger. As a result, they broke several ribs and suffered a partial collapsed lung.



A service member suffered broken bones in their foot when they fell off of a jet ski, mid turn.

# Boating Safety

*Each boat operator must abide by federal and state laws governing vessel operation and safety equipment onboard*

- ✓ Each vessel must be registered within the state, and federally documented by the U.S. Coast Guard
- ✓ As a passenger, ensure that certain safety equipment is available such as: Life preservers, visual and auditory distress signalers, fire extinguishers, proper ventilation, and navigation lights
- ✓ Always follow the Rules of the Road
- ✓ Know that negligent operation is punishable by law, to include: accidents, driving while intoxicated, and failure to comply with navigation rules
- ✓ Ensure the boat or vessel is tidy and up-to-date on operational maintenance
- ✓ Always stay alert and keep your eye on the water while on, or operating a boat
- ✓ Always wear a life preserver while onboard



# Boating Mishaps

The most common Boating mishaps include injuries sustained during slips, trips, and falls



A number of mishaps involved injuries sustained while departing a boat: either jumping off, walking off, or falling.



A service member received stitches and tetanus shot when they slipped off of a platform and cut their arm on a boat propeller.



While assisting other boaters, a service member injured their knee while securing a line to a cleat.

# Diving and jumping

*High Diving is the act of diving into water from great heights*

- ✓ Always jump feet first to avoid injury to head, neck, and arms
- ✓ Use caution when jumping into unclear water as there could be obstructions that could cause injury
- ✓ Never dive into shallow water
- ✓ Jumping or diving from great heights creates a risk of injuring muscles, bones, and joints



# Scuba diving



- ✓ Take a diving course, and always refresh yourself before each dive
- ✓ “Plan your dive, dive your plan”
- ✓ **Never dive alone**, use the buddy system
- ✓ Always check your gear before each dive
- ✓ Always dive in your comfort zone or skill level
- ✓ Holding your breath underwater can result in serious injury or even death
- ✓ Take time to establish positive buoyancy first
- ✓ Practice safe ascents to avoid “the bends”
- ✓ Pay attention to other divers

# Scuba diving Mishaps

A service member suffered a laceration from a nylon rope while participating in a dive training course.



*diving can be dangerous, or even deadly if you are not careful*



A service member suffered delayed symptoms of decompression sickness. Several hours after a deep dive, the service member was admitted to the emergency room where dive related complications were confirmed and treated.

# Snorkel safety



- ✓ Never snorkel alone
- ✓ Know how to clear your mask and snorkel of water
- ✓ Ensure your face mask and flippers are properly fitted
- ✓ Stay fit, snorkeling requires the ability to swim and float. Stamina and endurance is a main component to a positive experience
- ✓ Stay close to the shoreline identify entry and exit points to the water, in case you become too tired to swim back
- ✓ Always check the weather forecast and sea conditions before entering the surf
- ✓ Remember to apply (and reapply) sun screen

# Snorkeling mishaps in 2018



Service member suffered from a perforated eardrum while snorkeling at depths of 15 feet



A service member cut their foot on a cluster of coral while snorkeling



A Sailor suffered second degree burns on their back while snorkeling. Blisters developed on their shoulders, back and neck. The Sailor had initially applied skin protectant but failed to reapply after the recommended amount of time passed.



Service member went on a snorkeling spearfishing adventure and was struck in the head by a spear thrown by another snorkeler. The service member was then transported to the hospital where surgery was performed to remove the lodged spear.

# Toxic threats

Certain sea life can create risk of infectious wounds:

Sea Urchin



Sting Ray



Jelly fish



Stone Fish



- ✓ Keep in mind that you will be swimming with live animals who have evolved with survivalist defense mechanisms
- ✓ A jelly fish sting may only burn for a while, but stepping on a sea urchin can lead to infections if the barbs stay embedded in your skin
- ✓ To avoid injury, practice: **look but don't touch**
- ✓ Do some research and find out what threatening sea life exist in your region
- ✓ Stay close to the shore line, for a quick exit
- ✓ Never swim alone

In the summer of 2018, a service member was snorkeling. While underwater, they reached for what they thought was a stone, however quickly realized that the stone was actually a venomous fish. The service member was quickly rushed to the ER and dosed with anti-venom serum. Fortunately they were released after an overnight stay at the hospital.

# Paddle sports

Whether it's kayaking, rafting, canoeing, or paddle-boarding, each paddle sport carries its own risk

- ✓ Paddle in groups or with a buddy
- ✓ Train, prepare and use caution on the water
- ✓ Natural bodies of water are unpredictable and vary in level of risk depending on the weather
- ✓ Recognize natural obstacles and learn how to navigate them
- ✓ Always wear a life preserver
- ✓ Use a paddle or an oar that is sized specifically for you
- ✓ Dress in breathable layers and wear shoes

Have a picturesque moment...



...not a MEME



# Paddle sport mishaps



Service member was struck in the head by paddle from another kayaker.



Service member hurt their hand while loading kayaks onto a travel holder. The kayak crushed their hand, breaking several bones.



A paddle boarder fell off their board and cut their foot on a chunk of coral.

# fishing



There are  
so many  
ways to  
fish!

Spear fishing

Deep sea

From a kayak, canoe, or boat

Fly fishing

Ice fishing

Off a bridge or pier

On the beach

From a river bank

Fresh water, brackish water  
or sea

Crabbing

Noodling

- ✓ Make certain you have the correct fishing license
- ✓ Only fish in **safe** or **designated** areas
- ✓ Obey catch-and-release rules
- ✓ Check what is in season
- ✓ Practice situational awareness
- ✓ Don't put your hand or fingers inside a fish's mouth to retrieve hook
- ✓ Learn fishing first aid, such as removing a hook from your skin

# Pool, water park, and fountain safety

- ✓ Learn how to swim before participating
- ✓ Know CPR, and signs for a person drowning
- ✓ Always walk, **never run**
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with how deep the water is as well as when and where the depth changes
- ✓ Identify where life saving equipment is around the attraction: a pole, rope, or life rings
- ✓ Ensure all coverings are removed before swimming in a pool or fountain
- ✓ Never swim alone or without someone else knowing
- ✓ Read the instructions on the posted signs at pools and waterparks
- ✓ Stay hydrated with regular drinking water

# Recreational Water Illness

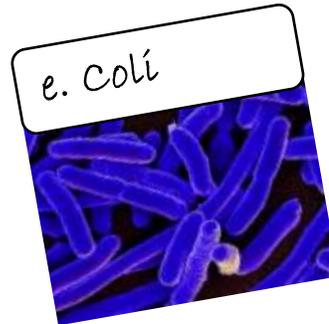
RWI's are most commonly acquired from water based activities involving pools, water parks, interactive fountains, lakes rivers, and oceans

Common RWI infections include:

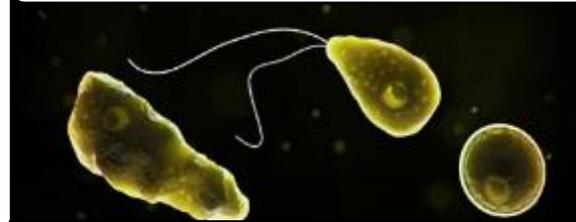
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Ear Infection
- Respiratory infection
- Chemical irritation of the eyes and lungs

Diarrhea is the most common symptom of a RWI, which is caused from germs such as:

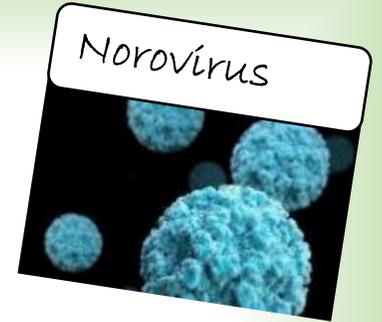
- Norovirus
- Giardia
- Shigella
- E-coli
- Cryptosporidium



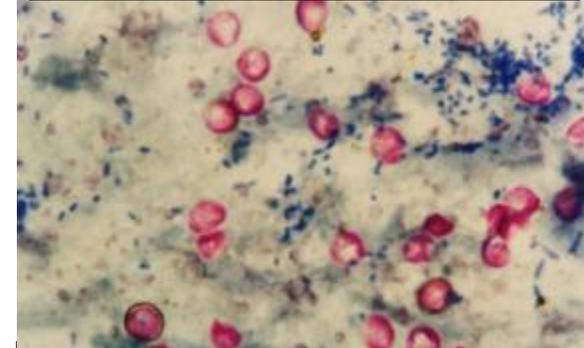
Naegleria Foweri amoeba



Rare cases of a brain tissue eating amoeba called "naegleria foweri" can be found in fresh water bodies. The amoeba enters the body through the nose. You cannot get infected from drinking contaminated water.



chryptosporidium



"Chrypto" can stay alive for *days* in a chlorine environment and has become the leading cause for pool-related outbreaks (according to the Center for Disease Control)

# Recreational Water Illness

Avoid contracting an RWI:



- ✓ Check the pool, fountain, or activity area for current inspection results
- ✓ Ensure the drain is visible from the surface and clear of debris
- ✓ Check water's pH levels with pool test strips
- ✓ Natural bodies of water are susceptible to water pollution
- ✓ Check bacterial levels of the water (*ocean or freshwater body*) before getting in, levels can be found on the EPA website and local news sources

All water play areas or interactive fountains such as wet deck, splash pad, spray pad, or spray par— recycle their water through a filtration system, the water spray that drips off your body ends up being sprayed out again

- ✓ Stay out of the water if you have recently been sick or have open wounds
- ✓ Rinse off before entering the water
- ✓ Do not go to the bathroom yourself in the water
- ✓ Do not swallow the water
- ✓ Rinse and/or wash yourself after exiting the water
- ✓ Dry your ears after swimming

# Skin Protection



use these methods to Avoid damaging ultraviolet rays:

- ✓ Stay in the shade
- ✓ Wear long sleeves or pants; rash guards are useful for water activities
- ✓ Wear a hat to protect your head, neck, ears, and face
- ✓ Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes, as well as areas around your eyes
- ✓ Lather on broad spectrum sun screen with a minimum SPF of 15
- ✓ **Always reapply** sun screen



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