

Media resource document

World Drowning Prevention Day 2022

KEY FACTS – GLOBAL

Drowning is a leading killer.

At least 236,000 people die from drowning each year.

There are approximately 27 drowning deaths, every hour, every day.

Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide.

Over 90% of drowning deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

RISK FACTORS

Wherever there is water, there is a threat of drowning.

Anyone can drown, no one should.

Drowning among children and young people

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for people aged 1-24 years.

Over half of all drowning deaths are among those aged under 30 years.

Children who live near open water sources, such as ditches, ponds, irrigation channels, or pools, are especially at risk of drowning.

Whether in a bucket, bathtub, pond or pool, almost all water is a risk for drowning – especially where young children are concerned.

Drowning among men

Males are twice as likely to drown as females.

Higher drowning rates among males are associated with increased exposure to water and riskier behavior such as swimming alone, drinking alcohol before swimming and boating.

Drowning associated with transport

Transport on water, especially on overcrowded or poorly maintained vessels, results in an increased risk of drowning.

Daily commutes in low-income countries often take place on overcrowded, unsafe vessels lacking safety equipment, or are operated by personnel untrained in dealing with transport incidents or navigation.

Drowning and occupational health

Commercial fishers, and subsistence fisherfolk – particularly those in low-income countries using small boats – are at greater risk for drowning.

Drowning and climate change

Flood disasters, extreme rain fall, storm surges, tsunamis and cyclones cause an increase in risk of drowning.

Flood disasters are becoming both more frequent as well as more severe and this trend is expected to continue as part of climate change.

Drowning accounts for 75% of deaths in flood disasters.

In low- and middle-income countries, many homes are located on lakes or riverbanks, and some are built over the water. This, along with poor flood disaster protection, puts local people at greater risk of drowning.

DROWNING PREVENTION

Drowning is preventable.

There are many actions to prevent drowning.

The World Health Organization encourages all countries to implement drowning prevention programming through implementation of the following six recommended interventions:

Intervention #1: Install barriers that control access to water

Placing barriers strategically so access to water hazards is limited or more tightly controlled reduces exposure and drowning risk.

This may include covering wells and cisterns (water tanks), using doorway barriers and playpens, and fencing swimming pools.

Intervention #2: Provide safe places away from water for pre-school children, with capable childcare

Community-based, supervised childcare for pre-school children can reduce drowning risk and has a wide range of other proven benefits.

Intervention #3: Teach school-aged children swimming, water safety and rescue skills

Swimming and water safety skills must be delivered using a structured, safety-tested curriculum, in a safe training environment. Trained instructors are required to deliver the training with appropriate risk management in place, following practical guidance of the World Health Organization. This guidance covers a range of measures to reduce risk including aspects such as: student-instructor ratios, safety audits, physical attributes of the training site and others.

Intervention #4: Train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation

Death occurs within minutes of the drowning process starting. Rescue and resuscitation must therefore be done immediately at the scene of a drowning event if it is to be effective. This makes it highly

desirable that the skills to perform rescue and resuscitation of drowning victims are present in as much of the population as possible.

Intervention #5: Set and enforce safe boating, shipping and ferry regulations

Regulation of safety measures for boats includes carrying out regular maintenance checks, ensuring the captain has the necessary skills and competence to command the vessel, avoiding overloading with passengers or goods, ensuring boats carry appropriate safety equipment, and restricting travel in poor weather.

Intervention #6: Improve flood risk management, locally and nationally

Building resilience to flooding and managing flood risks through better disaster preparedness planning, land use planning, and early warning systems can prevent drowning during flood disasters.

Key WHO resources

Global report on drowning: Preventing a leading killer: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/global-report-on-drowning-preventing-a-leading-killer>

Preventing drowning: an implementation guide:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241511933>

Preventing drowning: Practical guidance for the provision of day-care, basic swimming and water safety skills, and safe rescue and resuscitation training
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240046726>

Drowning deaths by country, for the year 2019

To report a WHO attributed number of drowning deaths in a specific country, use the formulation and table provided below:

“The World Health Organization estimates that [insert number from table below] people died from drowning in [insert country name] in 2019.”

Note: The values provided below are WHO estimates, and we acknowledge that national bodies may have more recent or comprehensive data on drowning burden.

Country name	Number of people who have died from drowning in 2019
Afghanistan	996
Albania	25
Algeria	451
Angola	1600
Antigua and Barbuda	2
Argentina	380
Armenia	21
Australia	177
Austria	42
Azerbaijan	335

Bahamas	26
Bahrain	22
Bangladesh	7094
Barbados	1
Belarus	543
Belgium	79
Belize	24
Benin	570
Bhutan	20
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	406
Bosnia and Herzegovina	48
Botswana	83
Brazil	4937
Brunei Darussalam	9
Bulgaria	129
Burkina Faso	910
Burundi	598
Cabo Verde	27
Cambodia	1113
Cameroon	1178
Canada	283
Central African Republic	202
Chad	1063
Chile	283
China	52807
Colombia	689
Comoros	35
Congo	104
Costa Rica	97
Cote d'Ivoire	1232
Croatia	86
Cuba	231
Cyprus	33
Czechia	152
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1126
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3454
Denmark	37
Djibouti	28
Dominican Republic	248
Ecuador	470
Egypt	1122
El Salvador	137
Equatorial Guinea	39
Eritrea	118
Estonia	30
Eswatini	87

Ethiopia	3133
Fiji	60
Finland	106
France	868
Gabon	42
Gambia	69
Georgia	95
Germany	459
Ghana	740
Greece	435
Grenada	4
Guatemala	463
Guinea	262
Guinea	528
Guinea-Bissau	89
Guyana	145
Haiti	1306
Honduras	183
Hungary	97
Iceland	1
India	48774
Indonesia	4518
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	930
Iraq	658
Ireland	57
Israel	39
Italy	344
Jamaica	10
Japan	8409
Jordan	107
Kazakhstan	680
Kenya	1200
Kiribati	9
Kuwait	19
Kyrgyzstan	226
Lao People's Democratic Republic	568
Latvia	127
Lebanon	62
Lesotho	200
Liberia	127
Libya	74
Lithuania	150
Luxembourg	2
Madagascar	825
Malawi	458
Malaysia	820

Maldives	14
Mali	1053
Malta	2
Mauritania	116
Mauritius	43
Mexico	1799
Micronesia (Federated States of)	17
Mongolia	151
Montenegro	11
Morocco	426
Mozambique	1418
Myanmar	2212
Namibia	110
Nepal	1505
Netherlands	98
New Zealand	54
Nicaragua	157
Niger	1581
Nigeria	6584
North Macedonia	18
Norway	65
Oman	211
Pakistan	5376
Panama	103
Papua New Guinea	240
Paraguay	178
Peru	584
Philippines	3881
Poland	636
Portugal	79
Qatar	45
Republic of Korea	501
Republic of Moldova	179
Romania	596
Russian Federation	6629
Rwanda	285
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	8
Samoa	13
Sao Tome and Principe	4
Saudi Arabia	821
Senegal	494
Serbia	73
Seychelles	12
Sierra Leone	366
Singapore	29

Slovakia	144
Slovenia	17
Solomon Islands	80
Somalia	1272
South Africa	2403
South Sudan	466
Spain	446
Sri Lanka	731
Sudan	1684
Suriname	28
Sweden	114
Switzerland	49
Syrian Arab Republic	215
Tajikistan	580
Thailand	3956
Timor-Leste	84
Togo	225
Tonga	4
Trinidad and Tobago	31
Tunisia	122
Turkey	549
Turkmenistan	153
Uganda	1238
Ukraine	2312
United Arab Emirates	169
United Kingdom	301
United Republic of Tanzania	1642
United States of America	4070
Uruguay	65
Uzbekistan	1147
Vanuatu	35
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	388
Viet Nam	5097
Yemen	1142
Zambia	689
Zimbabwe	956
Tajikistan	580
Thailand	3956
Timor-Leste	84
Togo	225
Tonga	4
Trinidad and Tobago	31
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