

Keeping you and your family safe in, on and around water.

2010
/2011
VICTORIAN
WATER
SAFETY
GUIDE
SINK OR
SWIM



www.watersafety.vic.gov.au

WATER SAFETY SIGNS

Where will I see water safety signs?

Look out for water safety signs when you visit an aquatic location and take some time to read them. The signs provide visitors with safety information about local hazards, the closest lifesaving service and regulations that apply to the area. Use the signs to determine the suitability of an area prior to undertaking any activities.

WARNING SIGNS



strong current



submerged objects



drop off

REGULATION SIGNS



PWCs prohibited



no diving



no fishing

INFORMATION SIGNS



life jackets



boat ramp



surfboard riding



When enjoying Victoria's wonderful coastline, lakes, river systems, public and home swimming pools, remember the following.

**PLAY IT SAFE
BY THE WATER**

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 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 skill. Everybody, especially school-age children, should be taught to swim and how to stay afloat. 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. Being able to swim also opens up sport, leisure and great recreational experiences.



POOL SAFETY



Home Pool Safety

Safety barriers – a legal requirement

It is law that swimming pools or spas on private residential properties in Victoria provide 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, even when provided, are no substitute for adult supervision of toddlers and children who are playing in or near swimming pools or spas. Barriers are required for:

- ▶ inground pools
- ▶ aboveground pools
- ▶ indoor swimming pools
- ▶ bathing and wading pools
- ▶ jacuzzis
- ▶ hot tubs
- ▶ spas

To ensure that your safety barrier remains effective:

- ▶ fit and maintain correct safety measures to gates, doors and windows (e.g. self-closing, self-latching devices, flyscreens)
- ▶ make sure you remove any items such as chairs, boxes, pool pumps that could be used to climb the barrier to access the pool.

For further information, contact your local council or the Building Commission on (03) 9285 6400 or visit www.buildingcommission.com.au

NEVER TAKE YOUR EYES OFF

Never take your eyes off children in and around the pool. Active supervision means that the child is consistently watched by an adult within arms reach.

Pool Safety Tips

- ▶ Supervision means constant visual contact, not the occasional glance. Even in a supervised public pool never take your eyes off children swimming and if they are under 5 you must be within arms 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 AUSTSWIM teachers, at the local pool.
- ▶ Empty paddling pools when they are not in use.
- ▶ Empty baths, basins, sinks, buckets and troughs, immediately after use.

INLAND WATER SAFETY

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 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 lethal. 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.



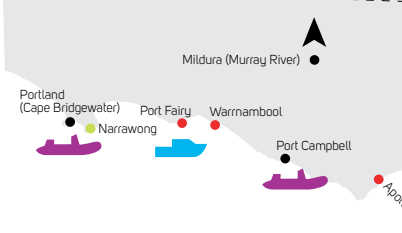
LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

River Safety

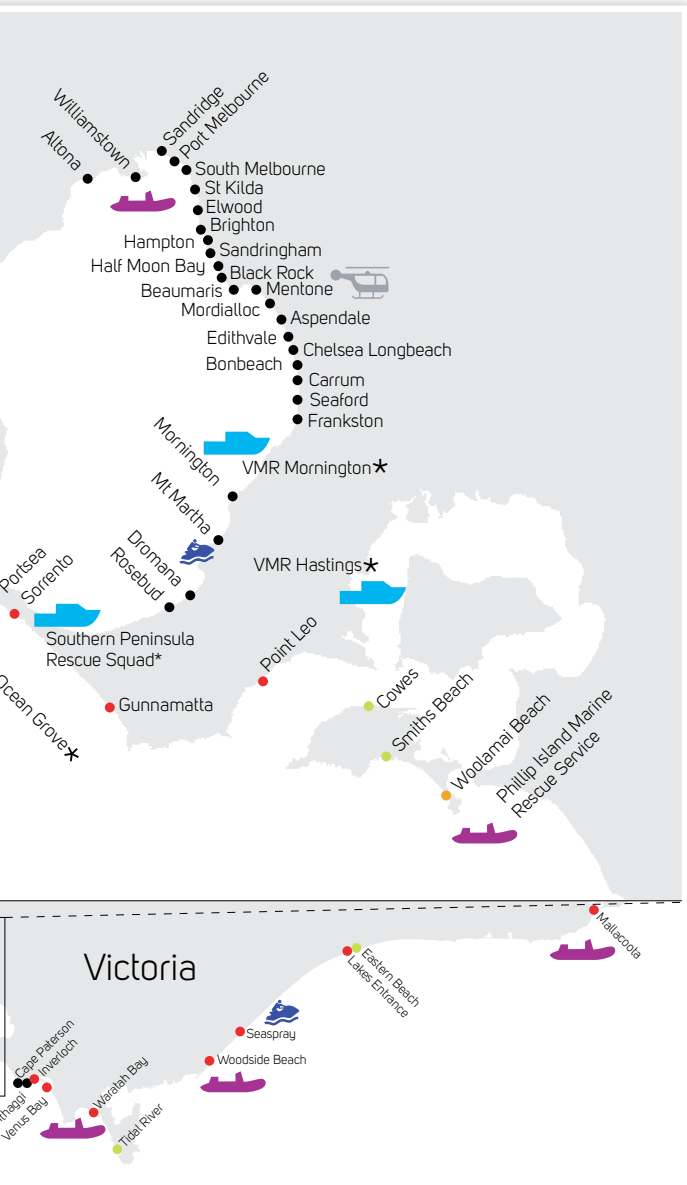
- ▶ Never swim in fast-flowing water. Check the speed first by throwing in a twig to see how fast it travels.
- ▶ If you are caught in a current, float on your back and travel downstream, feet first, to protect your head from impact with any objects.
- ▶ Beware of submerged objects. Trees, branches, 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.
- ▶ Watch out for soft or uneven river beds, which can cause difficulties for waders or swimmers.



- 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

BEACH SAFETY

Always Swim Between the Flags

Any beach can be dangerous. Beach-goers should be careful and always swim between the red and yellow flags, which indicate that the beach is patrolled. When swimming between the red and yellow flags, always look back to the beach to check that 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 identified by red and yellow flags. With 67 of Victoria's most popular beaches having lifesaving patrols during the summer months, there's no reason for you not to swim between the flags (see pages 6 and 7 for locations of these patrolled beaches).

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
- ▶ never swim alone
- ▶ read and obey the water safety signs.



EVERY AUSTRALIAN SHOULD LEARN ABOUT RIP CURRENTS

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.

You can survive rip currents by knowing your options:

- ▶ For assistance stay calm, float and attract attention
- ▶ To escape a rip, swim parallel to the beach
- ▶ Always conserve your energy, waves can assist you back to the beach



SURFING, BODYBOARDING AND ROCK FISHING



WHO'S LOOKING OUT FOR YOU?

Where can I go surfing?

At a patrolled beach all surfers must surf outside the blue 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 blue 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. Always let someone know where you are going.

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 www.surfingaustralia.com

What do I need to remember when rock fishing?

Rock fishing is a popular pastime for many Victorian anglers. Anglers take to the rock ledges on many parts of the coastline. Rock fishing can, however, be extremely dangerous. Most rock fishing deaths are caused by anglers being swept off rocks. Check conditions and stay alert to changes. Weather conditions can prove hazardous for people not properly prepared for the activity. When going rock fishing ensure you have the correct safety gear which includes a life jacket, non-slip footwear and light clothing. Be sure to inform someone of where you are rock fishing and ask for advice from locals who know the area, select the safest possible location.

Rock Fishing Safety Tips

- ▶ Always wear a life jacket (Personal Flotation Device) when rock fishing.
- ▶ Always check weather conditions and tides before going rock fishing.
- ▶ Never fish by yourself.
- ▶ Never fish in exposed areas during rough seas; find a calmer spot.
- ▶ Don't turn your back on the sea.
- ▶ Inform others of your plans.
- ▶ Wear appropriate non-slip footwear, light clothing and head protection.

**DON'T
PUT YOUR
LIFE ON
THE LINE**



BOATING SAFETY

Before heading out ensure that your safety equipment is on board and easily accessible. Make a habit of running a regular maintenance check on your boat.

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 and paddle craft.

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

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

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

What is heightened risk?

Heightened risk =

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

Inland Boating Safety Tips

- ▶ 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.

For more information go to www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au or contact us on 1800 223 022

GET ON BOARD WITH LIFE JACKETS

RESUSCITATION ACTION PLAN (DRABCD)

D – DANGERS

CHECK FOR HAZARDS / RISKS / SAFETY

Remove possible dangers

SEND FOR HELP

DIAL 000

ASK FOR THE
AMBULANCE SERVICE

R – RESPONSE

CHECK FOR RESPONSE

No response? Unconscious? CALL HELP – DIAL 000

A – AIRWAY

OPEN THE AIRWAY AND LOOK FOR SIGNS OF LIFE

Look, listen and feel for breathing. Check for coughing or any movement. Take at least 5 seconds, but no more than 10 seconds.

NO SIGNS OF LIFE:

UNCONSCIOUS
UNRESPONSIVE
NOT BREATHING
NORMALLY
NOT MOVING

B – BREATHS

GIVE 2 INITIAL RESCUE BREATHS IF NOT BREATHING NORMALLY

If the patient begins breathing 'normally' after these initial rescue breaths, place them in the recovery position and monitor them.



STILL NO SIGNS OF LIFE?

ADULT

6 YEARS OF AGE
AND OLDER

HEAD TILT:
FULL
COMPRESSIONS:
2 HANDS

C – COMPRESSIONS

GIVE 30 CHEST COMPRESSIONS FOLLOWED BY 2 BREATHS

Almost 2 compressions per second.



CHILD

1 – 5 YEARS OF AGE

HEAD TILT:
AS REQUIRED
COMPRESSIONS:
1 HAND

D – DEFIBRILLATION

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

INFANT

LESS THAN 1 YEAR
OF AGE

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

CPR

30:2

**PUSH FIRM
PUSH FAST**

**30 COMPRESSIONS
2 BREATHS**

5 CYCLES IN 2 MINUTES

CONTINUE CPR UNTIL
QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ARRIVE

OR

SIGNS OF LIFE RETURN

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. Mobile phone users who are unable to access the 000 service can also dial 112.

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

Surf Reports

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

Organisations

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

For additional copies of the 2010/2011 Guide contact:

- ▶ Life Saving Victoria (03) 9676 6900
- ▶ or download a copy from www.watersafety.vic.gov.au

All information is a guide only and current at the time of printing, September 2010.

