



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

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## Be Water Smart this Summer!

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**Halifax** (August 10, 2006) This summer the Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch wants all Nova Scotians to be Water Smart and Water Active, encouraging everyone to swim and boat safely.

The Lifesaving Society is an internationally recognized standard setter for drowning prevention and aquatic safety. The Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through training programs, research, Water Smart public education, and aquatic safety management services.

“Drowning is a serious issue in Nova Scotia,” said John Strickey, executive director of the Lifesaving Society, Nova Scotia branch. “About 99 per cent of drownings occur in unsupervised areas, so it is important that we encourage everyone to understand and utilize water safety practices.”

One way to ensure the safety of Nova Scotians in and around the water is through the recently established Lifesaving Society Swim to Survive Standard, which teaches the basic skills necessary for survival in the water.

Public education about the dangers related to water activities is crucial to all Nova Scotians and can significantly decrease the rate of drowning and water-related injuries in Nova Scotia. Recent studies show that 55 per cent of all drowning victims are between the ages of 18-49. Over half of all drowning incidents in Canada occur during the summer period of May to August. Also, the use of alcohol can be attributed to almost half of all drowning incidents in Canada.

Swimming is one of the most popular sports among Nova Scotian children under 14, and swimming is the only sport in which children under six participate in large numbers. “Swimming skills are not innate; they must be learned just as fire safety must be learned,” said Strickey.

For more information on the Swim to Survive standard or how to be safe in and around the water this summer, visit [www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca](http://www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca) .