



Water Safety New Zealand

Benchmark Survey

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1. Executive summary

This report presents the results of an online panel survey of the general public conducted during February 2016. Appropriate weights for gender, region, ethnicity and age were developed and applied to ensure that the results are nationally representative.

1.1 Knowledge

Overall there is a strong level of public concern around the issue of drownings in New Zealand.

86% of the public agreed that drowning is a problem in New Zealand.

33% reported they had first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water – where they were in serious difficulty themselves or saw someone else in trouble.

All respondents were asked if they have learnt to swim, and if they have learnt any water survival skills like what to do if caught in a rip.

- 83% said they have learnt how to swim
- 61% have swum at least 25m in any manner within the last 5 years
- 54% said they have learnt some water survival skills

Water safety messages

61% said they have seen or heard water safety messages in the past year.

- The main messages the public recalled were:
 - Wear your life jacket when boating 24%
 - Swim between the flags 18%

Perceptions of risk

The public were asked to identify who they thought was at most risk of drowning, and where this was most likely to happen.

***The majority said those at most risk of drowning are men and young people.
The beach was seen to be the place with the highest risk of drowning.***

85% agreed that men are more at risk of drowning than women (15%).

Age groups most at risk	Ranked in top 3
15 to 24 years	78%
Less than 5 years	72%
5 to 14 years	63%
Riskiest locations	
At the beach	75%
Coastline, rocks etc.	50%
Rivers	43%
At private homes (e.g. bath, pond, pool etc.)	40%

Respondents ranked their top 3 locations with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd highest risk of drowning.

Perceptions of the main factors contributing to drownings

The public were asked to comment on what they think are the main factors that contribute to more than 100 people dying by drowning each year in New Zealand.

> *Strong tides, poor abilities.*

78% mentioned risky behaviour contributing to drownings, including:

- Over-confidence 26%
- Carelessness 22%
- Not respecting risks/can't read conditions 21%

46% said lack of swimming skills and water safety knowledge, including:

- Can't swim (not learning/expensive) 30%
- Lack of education (knowledge of dangers/risks) 23%

Water safety knowledge

The public were asked to record what they think are the main safety tips that people should remember when participating in a variety of water related activities, (regardless of whether they participate or not).

The strongest messages recalled were:

- Wear a life jacket when boating (mentioned by 77%), and when taking part in recreational water sports (60%)
- Always supervise your children around water (74%)
- Swim between the flags at the beach (56%)

The main safety tips people should remember when they...

Go out recreational boating

- Life jackets – wear a life jacket 77%
- Be prepared - have emergency/safety equipment 7%

Are around water with young children

- Always supervise (watch your children – all the time) 74%
- Stay close (within arm's length/keep close/stay with them) 15%

Take part in recreational water sports (canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing, wind surfing, etc.)

- Wear life jacket 60%
- Be safe (go with others) 14%

Visit a beach for swimming or surfing

- Swim between flags (if patrolled)/on patrolled beaches 56%
- Be careful of/watch: rips/tides/currents 24%

Visit estuaries or tidal areas - walking, food gathering etc.

- Check/know the tide times 39%
- Keep safe: Be careful/aware 16%

Visit rivers for recreation – swimming, fishing, tramping, walking etc.

- Check for hazards - water depth/currents/under water - and act appropriately 33%
- Have people with you/not alone 14%
- Take care/be sensible/don't take unnecessary risks 13%

Visit the wild coastline or rocks - walking, fishing etc.

- Take care: stay on the track/off the edge/rocks 18%
- Coastline/waves can be unpredictable 18%
- Know the tide times 17%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately

n=1,000

Is the water safety message getting through to the appropriate groups?

The responses from actual participants were very similar to the general public. For example:

- Boaties were as likely (74%) as the general public (77%) to mention “wear a life jacket” when boating
- Pre-school caregivers (75%) were as likely as the general public (74%) to say “always supervise young children around water,” but they were more likely to mention “stay within arm’s length” (21% c.f. 15%)
- Fishers were more likely than the general public to mention:
 - Checking for hazards when visiting rivers (41% c.f. 33%)
 - Knowing the tide times when visiting the wild coastline or rocks (22% c.f. 17%)

However, people who indicated they had first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water were more likely than other groups to recall the appropriate safety measures.

1.2 Attitudes

The public were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements on a range of water safety issues.

- The majority agreed (or strongly agreed) with most of the issues, especially that pre-schoolers must be actively supervised (96%), life jackets should be compulsory for children (95%), and individuals must take more responsibility for their own water safety (95%)
- The exception was that only a fifth (22%) agreed “Most New Zealanders have been taught the skills to survive if they accidentally end up in the water

	Total: Agree
Children under 5 years of age should be actively supervised around water at all times	96%
Lifejackets should be compulsory for <u>children</u> to wear on water craft of 6m or less	95%
Individuals need to take more responsibility for their own water safety	95%
There should be alcohol limits for people in charge of boats or water craft	93%
Water survival skills should be a compulsory subject at primary school	91%
All schools should have access to swimming pools	90%
Lifejackets should be compulsory for <u>everyone</u> to wear on water craft of 6m or less	89%
Most drownings are preventable	86%
There should be licences for people using boats and watercraft	80%
Government & local councils need to do more to improve water safety in New Zealand	77%
Every swimming pool in New Zealand should be fenced	69%
Most people I know take water safety seriously	62%
Most New Zealanders have been taught the skills to survive if they accidentally end up in the water	22%
True n=1,000	

Public support for teaching water safety skills to primary school children

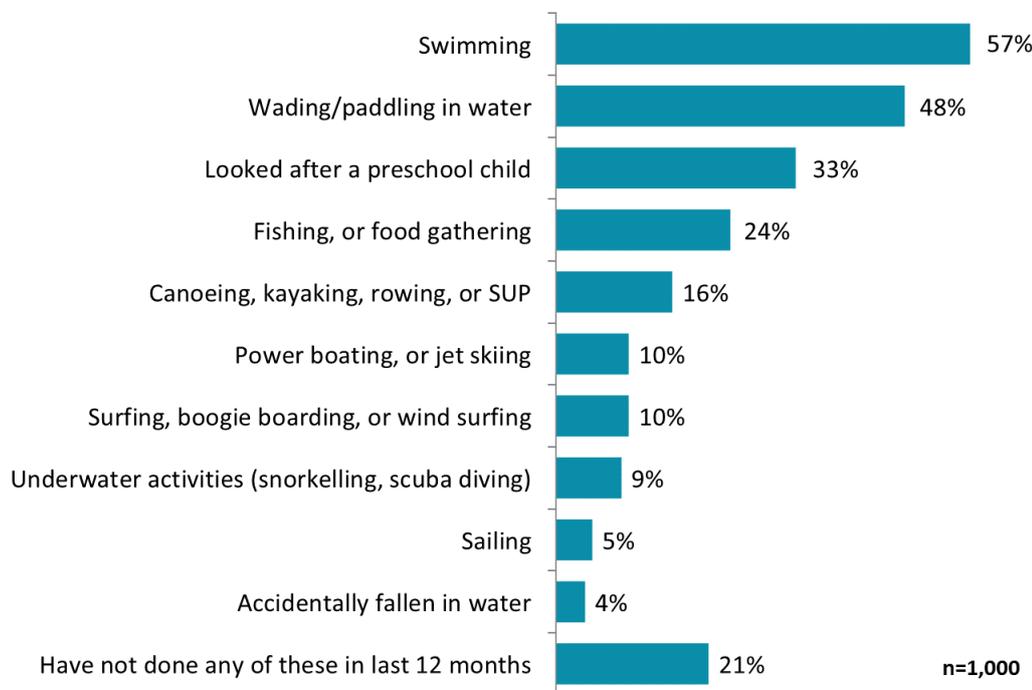
When asked which of a series of water safety skills primary school children should be taught first:

- Seven out of ten members of the general public (71%) rated “Water safety and knowledge” as one of the first three skills that should be learnt
- This was followed by “Basic movements through the water” rated in top three by over two-thirds (68%)
- Caregivers had similar responses to the rest of the general population

1.3 Behaviour and risks

Everyone was asked to indicate which of a series of water related activities they had done in New Zealand within the past 12 months. The most common were swimming (57%), wading/paddling in water (48%), looking after a preschool child (33%), and fishing or food gathering (24%).

Which of these activities have you done in the last 12 months in New Zealand?



Swimming, and wading/ paddling

The most common places people went swimming were a public swimming pool (55%), patrolled beach (40%), unpatrolled beach (39%) or private swimming pool (35%).

- More than three-fifths (62%) had been paddling at an unpatrolled beach or coastline, 36% at a river or stream and 33% at a patrolled beach

At **patrolled beaches**, 40% said they always swim between the flags, and 25% said they always wade in the patrolled area. The others were asked why they don't always stay within the flagged area.

- Why swimmers said they don't swim between the flags:
 - Flagged area too narrow and crowded 54%
 - I have skills/confident swimmer 29%
 - Life guards gone/no flags 22%
- Why wader/paddlers said they don't wade/paddle between the flags:
 - Walking along beach/shallow water 52%
 - Flagged area too busy/crowded 27%
 - Life guards gone/no flags/unpatrolled 17%

Swimmers at **unpatrolled beaches** reported:

- Three-fifths don't always read and follow safety notices (59%), don't always check the water for strong currents and rips (62%), and at least sometimes get in without any safety checks (63%)

- Over two-fifths (43%) sometimes (or more often) swim alone, and a fifth (21%) at least sometimes enter the water under the influence of alcohol

Swimmers at **rivers** indicated:

- While half (50%) always read safety notices, three-fifths don't always check the water for hidden obstacles (61%), don't always check the water or strong currents and depth (63%) and at least sometimes get in without any safety checks (61%)
- Almost a quarter (23%) sometimes (or more often) swim in rivers under the influence of alcohol, and two-fifths (41%) sometimes (or more often) swim alone

Supervising preschool children

33% had looked after a preschool child in the last 12 months

- Almost half supervised a bath (45%), and two-fifths (41%) a public swimming pool visit, while 30% were at an unpatrolled beach and 28% at private swimming pools
- When looking after a preschool child near water - just over two-thirds (69%) said they always stay within arm's reach of the child, while 87% said they never leave the child unsupervised
- Only two-thirds (67%) reported they never get distracted (by a phone etc.)

Fishing or food gathering

24% had been fishing (or food gathering) in the last 12 months.

- Almost half were at an unpatrolled beach or coastline (47%), while a third were off shore or at sea (35%), and a quarter at a harbour or estuary (25%)
- Just over half (55%) always check the weather forecast and conditions
- More than a quarter (28%) are at least sometimes by themselves
- Just over half (56%) always wear a life jacket when fishing from a boat, but only a fifth (21%) do when in the water, and a tenth when standing on rocks by water (10%)

Canoeing, kayaking, rowing or SUP

16% had been canoeing, kayaking, rowing or stand up paddleboarding in the last 12 months.

- A third were at unpatrolled beaches or coastline (34%), and a third on a lake or pond (31%). Over half always wear a life jacket (57%), and never go by themselves (52%)

Power boating or jet skiing

10% had been power boating or jet skiing in the last 12 months.

- Two-fifths of power boaters were off-shore (43%), a third were in a harbour or estuary (35%), while another third were on a lake or pond (32%). Three-fifths said they always wear a life jacket (60%)
- Two-fifths of jet skiers were on a lake or pond (43%), and over three-quarters said they always wear a life jacket (78%)

Surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing

10% had been surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing in the last 12 months.

- Around three-fifths were at patrolled beaches (63%), or unpatrolled beaches (61%). Less than a third always check the weather report and conditions (30%)

Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)

9% had participated in underwater activities in the last 12 months.

- Half had done these underwater activities at an unpatrolled beach or coastline (53%)
- Less than half said they always check the weather forecast and conditions (46%)
- A fifth sometimes or usually go out by themselves (22%), while two-fifths sometimes or usually separate from their buddy (42%)

Sailing

5% had been sailing in the last 12 months – so please note the smaller group responding to these questions

Sailing in **small boats** (6m or less):

- Half had been sailing on a lake (50%), and almost two-fifths at unpatrolled beaches or coastline (39%), off shore (38%), or harbour/estuary areas (37%)
- Half said all people on board always wear life jackets (50%), while over a third (37%) said there are not always enough life jackets for everyone
- Only a third said they always have the required safety equipment on board (33%), and over two-fifths (43%) go out by themselves at times
- A third are at times under the influence of alcohol (34%)
- When in charge of a small boat, less than half always check the weather or marine forecasts before they go out (48%)

Sailing in **large boats**:

- Almost two-thirds were off shore or at sea (64%) and half in harbours/estuaries (53%)
- A quarter said all people on board always wear life jackets (24%), while over a quarter (28%) reported there are not always enough life jackets for everyone
- Seven out of ten (71%) said they always have the required safety equipment on board, and there are never too many people on board (73%)
- Two-fifths (42%) said at times they (or others) are under the influence of alcohol
- When in charge of a large boat, just over half always check the weather or marine forecasts before they go out (56%)

Accidental falls in water

4% said they had accidentally fallen in water in the last 12 months.

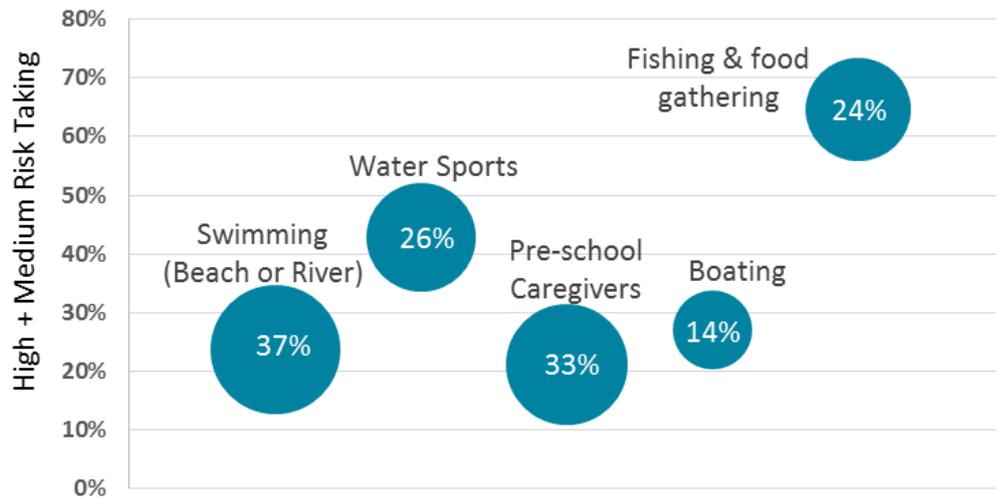
- Almost a third (31%) fell in a river or stream, over a quarter (28%) in a public swimming pool, while one fifth (20%) fell in a lake or pond, and another fifth in a private swimming pool (19%)

1.4 Risk profiles

People who participated in specific water-related activities were asked a series of risk related questions. For each individual, the number of reported risk taking behaviours was assessed against the number of activities undertaken to provide a risk score (%) which was in turn classified into a series of risk profiles ranging from no risk, through low, and medium, up to high risk.

Risk profiles	No risk	Low	Med	High	High + Med risk	Proportion of population
Fishing & food gathering	11%	24%	59%	6%	65%	24%
Water Sports	51%	6%	25%	18%	43%	26%
Boating	33%	40%	16%	11%	27%	14%
Swimming (Beach or River)	50%	26%	17%	6%	24%	37%
Pre-school Caregivers	51%	28%	15%	7%	21%	33%

- The activity with the highest proportion of medium to high risk takers was fishing and food gathering – 65% reported unsafe behaviours such as not always going with someone, or checking the weather report and conditions
- The second highest risk activity group was water sports – 43% were rated medium to high risk (they don't always follow water safety guidelines)
- While fewer swimmers and preschool caregivers had medium to high-risk profiles those activities are more common in the population



Circle size is proportional to the % the NZ public who undertake the activity

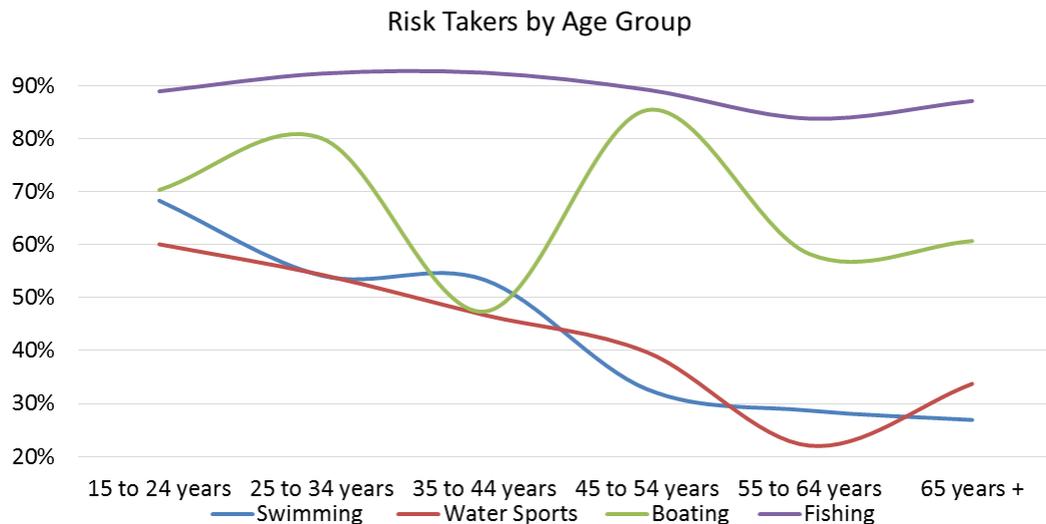
Note: to maximise available responses, “Boating” includes sailing and power boating, and “Water Sports” covers canoeing, surfing, jet skiing, underwater activities etc.

Who are the risk takers?

- **Fishing and food gathering** – Risk takers are very representative of this community
High risk takers are overly inclusive of those aged 35 to 44 and Aucklanders
- **Water sports** – risk takers appear slightly dominated by young men, but in general they are fairly representative of the water sports community
High risk takers tend to be under 45, and from cities
- **Swimming** - risk takers appear to be aged under 45, particularly aged 15 to 24 years
High risk takers are predominantly male, under 45. Risk-taking behaviour appears to peak in the 25-35 years bracket
- **Boating** – risk takers appear fairly representative of the boating community
High risk takers tend to be younger, under 35, from Auckland
- **Preschool caregivers** – Risk takers tend to be younger - particularly young men
High risk takers are young, particularly males in the 15 to 24 age group

Risk taking and age

It seems reasonable to assume that as we age we become more cautious. However as can be seen below, while this seems true of the more physical pursuits of swimming and water sports it does not necessarily apply to boating and fishing.



1.5 Some final thoughts

It's a sobering finding that a third of those surveyed said they had a first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water – some saved by life guards and coast guards, friends, family or strangers. Several found themselves having to attempt a rescue, while others witnessed someone not so lucky.

Some people do take safety measures seriously and try to be prepared for the unexpected. However, many reported risk-taking behaviour – not always having safety equipment on board, not checking conditions, the list goes on. Over-confidence, bravado and sheer stupidity all play a part. But there is strong concern that many New Zealanders currently lack the water safety skills and knowledge to have a fighting chance if they find themselves in a serious situation. 78% don't agree that most New Zealanders have been taught the skills to survive if they accidentally end up in the water

- > *It's too expensive to do it at the council pool for lessons. There aren't swimming lessons at all schools any more. Lots of parents and adults can't swim/aren't good swimmers so they don't want to teach their kids.*

It's certainly a challenge working out what to do about people over estimating their skills and under estimating the conditions. It appears as though many people are not sure about reading the water conditions before getting active in the water. There are also concerns expressed that it's becoming harder to learn to swim, for children, but also for immigrants unfamiliar with water safety skills.

- > *They don't think to go and get swimming lessons especially adults. It was great when Oscar Knightly shared his story. There should be more shared. The Pacific Islanders who migrate here don't know how to swim even though they are surrounded by water. They and Asians need to be educated. If kids in NZ learnt from primary school they are okay but by high school, PE is only compulsory for the first two years.*

While it is encouraging to see that the “wear a life jacket” message is getting through to the general public, the proportion who go boating or do water spots is small in comparison to other activities.

A third of those surveyed said they had looked after a young child in the last 12 months, and while three-quarters of the general population recalled the message that it is important to

always watch or supervise children around water, only 15% mentioned that it's important to stay right beside them - within arm's reach of a child around water.

Some young men are a risk in the water, and when supervising children.

The third who have experienced a serious situation in the water first-hand were more likely than others to recall the safety messages. They take water safety more seriously. This suggests that stronger messages may be required to make a difference on behaviour. It's time to get serious.

People enjoy the freedom:

- > *I like swimming for the freedom and respect for the vastness and beauty of the ocean. I try to keep marine life as undisturbed as possible therefore I have had many wildlife encounters. It is not peaceful to listen to everyone else and crash into other people etc it ruins the experience. I take all precautions I can and behave safely. Anything I do is my own responsibility and at my own risk. It's the only way it's worth it for me. Here I'll be corny and say I like to live life in the wild and rugged. Life isn't meant to be lived between the flags.*

But being unprepared or under-estimating the conditions can be costly. We need to help people to be better aware of the risks, to stop and consider the conditions, to be prepared for the unexpected and to reduce the number of drownings.

- > *I was caught in a rip while surfing on Auckland's west coast and washed towards a rocky coastline. I was fortunately rescued by Surf Lifesavers.*
- > *My father drowned while flounder fishing with a net. He was wearing body waders and stepped into a hole. He was a very good swimmer but when his waders filled up he didn't have a show.*

2. Background

Water Safety New Zealand commissioned **MMResearch™** to conduct a benchmark survey designed to reveal the public's attitudes towards, knowledge of, and adherence to key elements of the water safety message.

- The idea was to use the Benchmark Survey to build a picture of “where we are at now” in terms of attitudes, knowledge and behaviours, and then to use a Monitor (or “Pulse”) Survey to provide periodic updates for key measures of attitude, knowledge and behaviour to determine the rate and direction of change.
- The subsequent Monitor (or “Pulse”) Survey would be an occasionally repeated, abbreviated version that would focus on a set of core measures from the Benchmark Survey to detect and monitor changes over time (for example in risk behaviours like kayaking without a life jacket).

This report presents the results from the benchmark survey. It was conducted online from 12 to 28 February 2016.

2.1 Research objectives

Broadly, the key outcome we were working towards with this survey was:

- To estimate the proportion of the NZ public who indicate they behave in a responsible manner around water in specific situations, e.g. when boating etc.

The first outcome for the NZWS Sector Strategy 2020 is:

- A changed culture in which every New Zealander:
 - Understands the risks associated with water, and
 - Has the ability to survive in, on or around water.

In terms of understanding the risks associated with water, the survey aims to measure:

- The understanding people have of key safety behaviours
- The level of public concern, e.g. is drowning perceived to be a problem in NZ?
- Public perceptions of who is most at risk of drowning (& most risky locations)
- What people say are the main factors that contribute towards the more than 100 people drowning each year

It is difficult to measure if people have the ability to survive in, on or around water. Previous research has shown that many people overestimate their ability and underestimate their risk. So, we have several questions related to this:

- Recent swimming experience, plus
- Questions which are asked of people who have participated in specific water-related activities. These aim to assess whether they follow safety guidelines, with the assumption that this makes them more likely to survive, e.g. if they “always” wear a life jacket when “sailing” etc.

Limitation

It should be noted that while a survey of 1,000 members of the New Zealand public for this Benchmark provides well for measures relating to “where we are at now” in terms of **attitudes** and **knowledge** of the public in general, not everyone necessarily participates in the activities for which we intend to measure **behaviours**. Those sample sizes or sub sets are smaller. For example, in this survey:

- 57% said they have been swimming in New Zealand in the last 12 months

2.2 Research methodology

This was an online panel survey. It was designed to be accessible on the respondents' computer or mobile device.

- The questionnaire was developed in consultation with Water Safety New Zealand and key stakeholder organisations.
- The stated population of interest for this research was the "New Zealand Public 15 years and over." The sample frame used to deliver this population was a 65,000 strong online panel of the NZ public. The overall achieved sample size was set at n=1,000.
- Potential respondents were randomly selected from a Research Now online panel. They had to be at least 15 years old.
- Oversampling was employed in an endeavour to provide maximum cell sizes for analysis and to counter expected response resistance from groups such as young people.
- Appropriate weights for gender, region, ethnicity and age were developed and applied to ensure that the results are nationally representative.

Demographics

An important part of being able to usefully analyse any set of data is to actively ensure that any sub populations (groups) of particular interest are adequately represented in the sample and in great enough numbers that estimates can be made to allow comparison to be made between these groups. Using the online panel means that we were able to pre-stratify our sample to ensure that smaller groups were as well represented as possible.

Our understanding is the following demographic groups are of specific interest to WSNZ:

- Age / age group
- Region
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Parents of 5 year olds and younger
- Parents of children aged 5-14 year olds
(Other demographics can be added on request.)

We proposed that the survey sample would be managed in such a way as to actively:

- Balance gender
- Over-sample for Maori/Pacific Peoples
- Under-sample European NZers
- Over-sample parents of children aged under 5 years
- Regions (16) are proportionally represented

This allowed us a certain degree of control in seeking to minimise the margin of error associated with statistics for any of the sub population groups. In this way we will provide the best possible quality statistics that the survey frame and budget can support.

When statistics are used to present the full national picture, post-stratification weights were calculated and applied to ensure that those groups who are over or under represented numerically in the final sample contribute appropriately to the overall estimate.

This study was designed and conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice established by The Research Association of New Zealand. MMRResearch™ believes that this report represents a fair, accurate and comprehensive analysis of the information collected, with all sampled information subject to normal statistical variance.

2.3 Sample

The population of interest for this research was the “New Zealand Public 15 years and over.” The overall achieved sample size was set at n=1,000.

	Est. % of Total Population*	Achieved Sample	Maximum Margin of Error (approx.)
Gender			
Male	49%	473	4.5%
Female	51%	527	4.3%
Total		1000	3.1%
Ethnicity			
New Zealand European	67%	592	4.0%
New Zealand Māori	13%	152	7.9%
Pacific Islander	6%	38	15.9%
Asian	9%	119	9.0%
Other	5%	99	9.8%
Total		1000	3.1%
Parents with children			
0-4 years old	-	149	8.0%
5-14 years old	-	204	6.9%
Total Parents	33%	353	5.2%
Youth (aged 15 - 25)			
Male	8%	107	9.5%
Female	8%	140	8.3%
Total Youth	15%	247	6.2%
Region			
Auckland	33%	302	5.6%
Bay of Plenty	6%	54	13.3%
Canterbury	13%	114	9.2%
Gisborne	1%	11	29.5%
Hawke's Bay	4%	42	15.1%
Manawatu-Wanganui	5%	59	12.8%
Marlborough	1%	13	27.2%
Nelson	1%	12	28.3%
Northland	4%	49	14.0%
Otago	5%	49	14.0%
Southland	2%	28	18.5%
Taranaki	3%	33	17.1%
Tasman	1%	11	29.5%
Waikato	9%	103	9.7%
Wellington	11%	112	9.3%
West coast	1%	8	34.6%
Total		1,000	3.1%

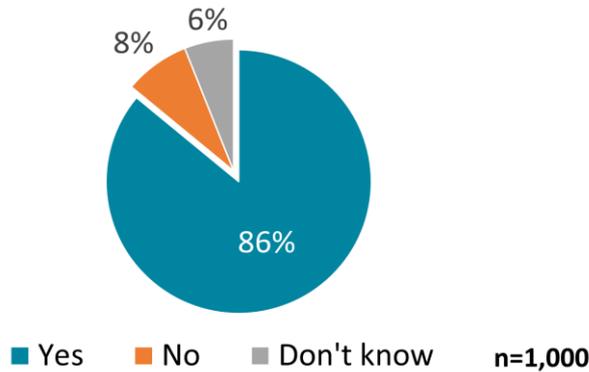
*Source: StatsNZ Census 2013

3. Knowledge

3.1 Level of public concern

The first questions measured the New Zealand public’s knowledge of water safety facts and messages.

In your opinion, is drowning a problem in New Zealand?



The majority - over four-fifths (86%) - said that drowning a problem in New Zealand.

Demographic variations:

- Those more likely to agree (90%) were of NZ European ethnicity
- The groups less likely to agree that drowning is a problem were:
 - Living in Auckland 79%
 - Asian ethnicity 67%

Safety issues

When asked to rank a series of safety issues, over a third (36%) rated water safety as one of their top three concerns.

Which of these safety issues are of most concern to you?



Note: Respondents ranked the issues from 1 to 7, shows % who mentioned issue in their top 3.

Water safety was ranked fairly consistently across regions, genders and ethnicities, but was seen as somewhat more important (45% ranked it in their top 3) by pre-school caregivers.

Public perceptions about the scale of the problem

The public were asked to give an estimate for the number of people they think die by drowning, and the number who receive drowning related injuries each year in New Zealand.

The average estimates given were slightly high compared to the 5 year averages - at 123 deaths and 396 drowning related injuries.

Each year, how many people in New Zealand do you think?

	Average number given	Don't know	5 Year average*
Die by drowning	123	32%	108
Receive drowning related injuries	396	49%	174

*Note: 5 year averages provided by WSNZ

- Drowning deaths average from 1 Jan 2011 – 31 Dec 2015
- Drowning injuries average from hospitalisations from 1 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2014

However, a large proportion of the public were unsure.

Public perceptions of the number of people in New Zealand who...

Estimate is:	low	about right	high	Don't know
Die by drowning	43%	14%	11%	33%
	<75	75-125	125+	
Receive drowning related injuries	27%	9%	14%	50%
	<150	150-200	200+	

3.2 Swimming and survival skills knowledge

All respondents were asked if they have learnt to swim, and if they have learnt any water survival skills like what to do if caught in a rip.

83% said they have learnt how to swim.

54% said they have learnt some water survival skills.

The proportion who said they swam at least 25m in any manner, including doggy paddle in the last:

- 12 months 41%
- 5 years 20%
- 10 years 8%
- More than 10 years ago 21%
- Never 11%

Demographic variations

	Auckland	Northland & East North Island	West North Island	Central	Rest of South Island	Male	Female	National
Have learnt how to swim	75%	85%	91%	81%	88%	81%	84%	83%
Have learnt any water survival skills	47%	62%	65%	52%	51%	60%	48%	54%
Have swum at least 25m in the last:								
• 12 months	41%	42%	36%	40%	42%	41%	40%	41%
• 5 years ago	22%	17%	19%	20%	19%	19%	20%	20%
• 10 years ago	6%	9%	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%	8%
• More than 10 years ago	14%	21%	31%	21%	22%	21%	20%	21%
• Never swum 25m	16%	11%	7%	11%	7%	10%	12%	11%
N=	302	156	195	148	199	473	527	1000

Key differences:

- Aucklanders were the least likely to have learnt to swim (75%), and more likely to have never swum 25m (16%)
- People in the West of the North Island were more likely to have learnt to swim (91%), learnt water survival skills (65%), and swum 25m more than 10 years ago (31%)
- NZ European (87%) and Maori (89%) were the most likely to have learnt to swim, while Pacific (68%) and Asian (62%) people were less likely
- NZ European (61%) were more likely to have learnt survival skills, while Asian people were less likely (26%)
- Asian people were much more likely to have never swum 25m (29%)
- Men (60%) were more likely than women (48%) to have learnt survival skills – or perhaps just more likely to think they have?

3.3 Water safety messages

The key water safety campaigns and messages that have been publicised over the past year are summarised below. (Provided by Water Safety New Zealand.)

WSNZ Within Arm's Reach Under 5 campaign

Always keep your child within sight and reach around water.

- Always empty and store paddling pools and water containers after use and ensure you have a safely fenced play area.
- Identify water hazards in and around your home and ensure your children can't reach them.
- If with a group of people, ensure you have an active supervision roster so you know who is watching the children at all times
- Make sure older children don't have to take responsibility for younger children.
- Teach your children water safety behaviour from as soon as they are old enough to understand, like: 'Never go near the water unless you're with a grown up'.
- It only takes sixty seconds and two inches of water for a child to drown.

Maritime NZ Safer Boating Week

- **Prep your boat** – service the engine, check and change the fuel, check the battery and just generally give the boat a good onceover.
- **Check your gear** – make sure your lifejackets are still fit for purpose and you have enough. Service any inflatable lifejackets and ensure you have two reliable forms of communication equipment.
- **Know the rules** – ensure you know the “rules of the road” on the water, and check your local bylaws to make sure you understand what the requirements are in your area.

NZ Underwater – Underwater Safety Awareness

- Always watch out for the blue and white dive flags
- Fly the dive flag whenever someone is in the water
- Always dive with a buddy

WSNZ Stop and Think before you Go: Stop and think before you go near the water this summer

Surf Life Saving NZ Annual Summer Appeal

- Back the red and yellow surf lifesaving flags this summer
- Always swim between the red and yellow flags
- Calling for public support and donations to SLSNZ

Coastguard NZ Mayday Appeal: Calling for public support and donations to Coastguard NZ

WSNZ Save our School Pool campaign

- Keep NZ School Pools open
- Save NZ School Pools

The Water Safety Code

- Be prepared
- Watch out for yourself and others
- Be aware of the dangers
- Know your limits



Kia Maanu Kia Ora Maori Water Safety campaign: Stay afloat, stay alive

Sealord Swim for Life: Learn to swim to survive

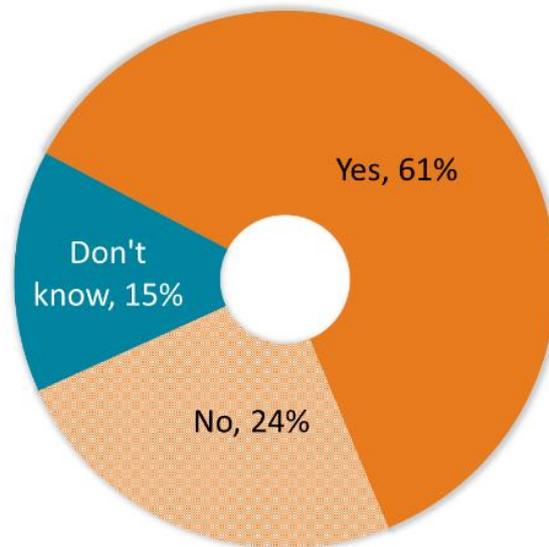
Plunket Bathmat Campaign

Always supervise children around water, always.

3.4 Awareness of water safety messages

Overall, three-fifths (61%) said they have seen or heard water safety messages in the past year.

In the past year have you seen or heard any water safety messages?



n=1,000
February 2016

Those less likely to have reported having seen or heard water safety messages were:

- Living in Auckland 51%
- Preschool caregivers 51%
- Pacific People 38%
- Asian people 44%

Maori were the group most likely to report having seen or heard water safety messages (71%).

3.5 Unprompted recall of water safety messages

Respondents' descriptions have been thematically coded to show the main water safety messages the public can remember from the past year.

What were the main messages?

Wear your life jacket/safety vest when boating	24%
Swim between flags/supervised areas/follow life guard instructions	18%
Watch out for/supervise children near water	9%
Water safety/stay safe/be careful/water wise	8%
Learn to swim/teach children/float	7%
Rips (watch for/what to do)	4%
Know your limits (be safe/careful in water/water kills/watch out for mates)	4%
Assess risks/hazards/know depth of water (rivers/tides)	3%
News report/drowning story/ad (TV, online, radio, newspaper)	3%
Know the conditions/check weather before boating/fishing - take care off rocks	2%
Secure/fence pools/swimming areas/gates	2%
Don't go alone (swim/dive)	2%
Stop and think	2%
Use safety equipment/follow regulations/be prepared/dress appropriately	1%
No alcohol while swimming/boat captain	1%
Check warning signs/ if allowed to swim	1%
Safety of drinking water (boil water/fluoride)	<1%
Pool closure problems/keep pools open	<1%
Can't remember it	1%
True n=	1,000

3.6 Perceptions of risk

Risky locations

When the public were asked where they think there is the most risk of drowning in New Zealand, three-quarters (75%) put the beach in their top three riskiest locations. Half mentioned the coastline or rocks (50%), over two-fifths said rivers (43%) and two-fifths mentioned private homes (40%).

Where do you think there is the most risk of drowning in New Zealand?

	Ranked:	Top 3	1st	2nd	3rd
At the beach		75%	43%	19%	13%
Coastline, rocks etc.		50%	15%	21%	15%
Rivers		43%	8%	18%	17%
At private homes (e.g. bath, pond, pool etc.)		40%	13%	12%	14%
Off shore or at sea		30%	8%	11%	11%
Tidal areas and estuaries		26%	5%	9%	12%
Lakes		17%	3%	5%	9%
Harbours		6%	1%	2%	3%
Public swimming pools		5%	1%	2%	3%
Don't know/unsure		2%	2%	0%	0%

Respondents ranked their top 3 locations with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd highest risk of drowning.

Demographic variations

There were some significant demographic differences.

- Groups more likely to include rivers in their top three were:
 - South Islanders (52%)
 - NZ Europeans (49%)
- NZ Maori saw private homes as presenting risk (51%)
 - In contrast only 20% of Asian Peoples saw private homes as presenting risk
- Aucklanders were more likely than others to include harbours (10%) and swimming pools (9%)
- Preschool caregivers were more likely than others to include harbours (12%) and swimming pools (12%), but were less likely to identify the coastline in their top three (37%)

The risky gender

The majority (85%) agreed that men are more at risk of drowning than women.

Who do you think is at most risk of drowning?

- 85% said males
- 15% said females

Risky age groups

The public were asked to identify the three age groups they think are at most risk of drowning.

The majority thought younger people were more at risk of drowning:

- More than three-quarters (78%) mentioned teenagers and young adults (aged 15 to 24 years) in their top three.
- Just under three-quarters (72%) selected pre-schoolers (aged under 5 years), and almost two-thirds (63%) said children (aged 5 to 14 years).

The public perception appears to be that people aged over 35 years have a lower risk of drowning.

Which three age groups do you think are at most risk of drowning?

	Ranked:	Top 3	1st	2nd	3rd
15 to 24 years		78%	35%	22%	21%
Less than 5 years		72%	39%	18%	15%
5 to 14 years		63%	13%	31%	18%
25 to 34 years		38%	8%	15%	15%
35 to 44 years		15%	1%	4%	9%
65 years or older		15%	1%	5%	9%
45 to 54 years		11%	2%	3%	6%
55 to 64 years		8%	1%	2%	6%

Respondents ranked their top 3 age groups with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd highest risk of drowning.

3.7 Public perceptions of the main factors contributing to drownings

The public were asked what they think are the main factors that contribute to more than 100 people dying by drowning each year in New Zealand. This was an unprompted question, and respondents were asked to write their opinion (e.g. a free text answer). The comments have been coded thematically and a summary is presented below.

Overall, more than three-quarters (78%) commented on elements of risky behaviour contributing to drownings – over confidence (over-estimating abilities and under-estimating risk), being careless or stupid, not respecting risk, going to dangerous places, going alone, being unprepared, unsupervised etc.

- > *That people overestimate their abilities and underestimate the conditions. Not enough people wear lifejackets when out at sea. Children not supervised at all times around water.*
- > *Recklessness - not wearing life jackets on boats. Negligence - parental inattentiveness. Lack of knowledge about rips and currents.*
- > *Not taking notice of warning signs posted. Not wearing life jackets. Jumping into water without knowing what's underneath. Unattended children around water. Alcohol.*
- > *Stupidity, not adhering to safety rules, not watching children, pool area not safe, not wearing life jackets and listening to weather patterns.*
- > *River jumping not seeing rocks etc below the surface, and rips at unpatrolled beaches.*
- > *People take too many risks with little knowledge of both the area and the water when swimming and fishing.*
- > *Youthful. Most people enjoy a day out in the sun and beach but they are careless about the dangers out in the waves and because of their mindset of how young and carefree they are, they forget about the warnings and dangers out there.*

- > *They think it will never happen to them don't wear life jackets don't swim between the flags and don't know the risks of rips. At home they don't have adequate rules and fencing around pools - don't make the danger clear enough to children*
- > *Not thinking about what they are doing, no risk assessment before they go in.*
- > *Not wearing life jackets when out on the water, going swimming in unsafe conditions, children not being supervised at all times when near water, not respecting the water and the conditions, taking drink or drugs when near water and being reckless.*
- > *People taking too many risks not swimming between the flags underestimating the conditions*
- > *Over estimating their swimming fitness, underestimating the ocean, not knowing much about rips and how to get out of them.*
- > *Our interest in water based recreation lack of precautions in residential areas...drains, private pools, buckets, etc. with small children*
- > *Not understanding the power of the ocean*
- > *They don't know how to swim. People ignore the warnings and swim anyway.*
- > *Not watching for danger, i.e. rips, etc., and a general gung-ho "I'm invincible" attitude.*
- > *Not swimming within the flags Not wearing a life jacket Standing on rocks where waves can come to knock you off*
- > *Poor preparation. Not heading all the warnings broadcast about swimming between the flags, no alcohol, etc. Stupidity in not respecting the environment of any body of water*
- > *Simply not thinking, being unaware of water, especially tidal, movement, rips, current. Snags and current in rivers. Alcohol, swimming in clothes. Underestimating the power of...*
- > *People not stopping to make sure it is safe before getting in*
- > *People not being able to swim/not being taught to swim as a child. Young children not being supervised properly around water. People making stupid decisions around/in water.*
- > *Not understanding the dangers of the water. Not swimming in safe places where there is supervision and safety personnel close by.*
- > *Not taking the water seriously Just like the attitude to driving in this country.*
- > *Swimming in areas where there is no flags and being caught in a rip. Parents not watching their children or haven't taught them about water safety.*
- > *Underestimation of rips and waves which pull the people out to sea. Also the strength and size of the waves, which pulls them under the water.*
- > *Alcohol, lack of preparation for and ignorance of conditions, bravado i.e. Over-confidence*

Almost half (46%) mentioned that lack of safety skills and knowledge contribute to drownings – not being able to swim, lack of water safety knowledge, closure of school pools etc.

- > *Strong tides, poor abilities.*
- > *They don't know how to swim - maybe they could never afford swimming lessons. Not many schools have their pools up and running these days.*
- > *Poor education and poor parenting*
- > *Poor education on risks, poor swimming ability*
- > *The country we live in: lots of water around. Prohibitive cost of swimming lessons for children.*
- > *Schools not teaching pupils to swim Swimming clubs no longer having free learn to swim classes*
- > *Stupidity in cases of adults, lack of parent supervision in cases of children. (Both perhaps from lack of water safety awareness.)*
- > *Understanding the risk, unawareness, not enough information on boards, media and TV*
- > *Too vain to wear a life jacket & not being taught how to swim in schools.*
- > *People don't have enough information about swimming conditions (currents etc.) In a particular place*
- > *The fact that so many of the parents of the new generation kids are too busy to actually teach their kids how to swim and the water safety rules.*

Currently more than 100 people die by drowning each year in New Zealand. What do you think are the main contributing factors?

Total - Risky behaviour	78%
Over-confidence <i>Risk taking/over estimating ability/under estimating risk/not knowing limits/ bravado</i>	26%
Carelessness <i>Stupidity/bad decisions/complacency/lack of common sense</i>	22%
Not respecting risks/can't read conditions <i>Not checking/unfamiliar with conditions/underestimate/ignorant of danger (not aware of rips/tides/rocks/hazards)</i>	21%
Swimming in dangerous places <i>Unpatrolled/outside flags/caught in rips/out of depth/fishing on rocks</i>	15%
Unsupervised <i>Lack of/poor supervision/Children unsupervised/irresponsible parents/neglect</i>	15%
Alcohol <i>Swimming/on boats</i>	11%
Not wearing life jackets <i>On boats/flotation aids</i>	11%
Ignoring water safety rules and warnings <i>Life guards/flags/unsafe practices (over loading boats, unfenced pools)</i>	6%
Being unprepared <i>Lack of safety equipment/unmaintained/inappropriate clothing</i>	6%
Bad weather/waves/conditions/rough seas/ignorance	3%
Going alone/not informing others	2%
Drugs	1%
Trying to rescue others	1%
Total: Lack of swimming skills and water safety knowledge	46%
Lack of swimming skills <i>Can't swim/not learning to swim/expensive</i>	30%
Lack of water safety knowledge <i>Lack of education/knowledge of dangers & risk/precautions/inexperience</i>	23%
Lack of school swimming/pools in schools/funding	3%
Tourists/immigrants - unaware of NZ conditions/language barriers	1%
Lack of warning signs/info	1%
Total: Unpreventable factors	4%
Accident/bad luck/boats capsizing/water (in lungs)/medical issues/suicide	3%
NZ life style/environment/lots of coast lines/rivers/high participation in water activities/adventure loving	1%
Don't know/not answered	3%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

4. Water safety knowledge (unprompted)

The public were asked what they think are the main safety tips that people should remember when participating in a variety of water related activities. This was an attempt to measure unprompted awareness of safety knowledge. The comments have been coded by main theme and a summary is shown below. More detail and examples follow.

The main safety tips people should remember when they...

Go out recreational boating

- Life jackets – wear a life jacket 77%
- Be prepared - have emergency/safety equipment 7%
Location beacon/flares/GPS/radar/safe, well-maintained boat/safety training

Are around water with young children

- Always supervise (watch your children – all the time) 74%
- Stay close (within arm's length/keep close/stay with them) 15%

Take part in recreational water sports - canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing, wind surfing, etc.

- Wear life jacket 60%
Safety vest/buoyancy vest/floatation device/sound equipment
- Be safe 14%
Go with experienced people/not alone/watch out for others

Visit a beach for swimming or surfing

- Swim between flags (if patrolled)/on patrolled beaches 56%
- Be careful of/watch: rips/tides/currents 24%
Also watch rocks/weather/hazards - go out in good/safe conditions

Visit estuaries or tidal areas - walking, food gathering etc.

- Check/know the tide times 39%
Watch the tide/water/rips/don't turn your back to the sea
- Keep safe: Be careful/aware 16%
Check conditions/slippery/watch where walking/stay on track/read signs

Visit rivers for recreation – swimming, fishing, tramping, walking etc.

- Check for hazards - water depth/currents/under water - and act appropriately *Safe crossings/swimming* 33%
- Have people with you/not alone 14%
Take a buddy/swim with others/supervision/tell someone/communicate/cell phone
- Take care/be sensible/don't take unnecessary risks 13%
Stick to paths/stay within boundaries/read the signs/observe rules/guidelines

Visit the wild coastline or rocks - walking, fishing etc.

- Take care: stay on the track/off the edge/rocks 18%
Read safety notices/obey instructions/ wear safety gear/be prepared
- Coastline/waves can be unpredictable 18%
Watch for rogue waves/water conditions/don't turn your back to the sea
- Know the tide times 17%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately

n=1,000

4.1 Water safety with young children

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they... Are around water with young children?

Total: Always supervise or stay close to children around water	84%
Always supervise (watch your children – all the time)	74%
Stay close (within arm's length/keep close/stay with them)	15%
Be careful (empty baths/close pool gates/stay shallow)	3%
Wear safety vests/life jackets	1%
Wear water wings/flotation device	1%
Teach them water safety measures/to swim	1%
Other safety messages (not necessarily for young children)	1%
Don't know	13%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Most - three-quarters (74%) said the main safety tip to remember when around water with young children is to always watch the children.

- > *Never take your eyes off the kids*
- > *Watch children at all times*
- > *Parents or old people should watch out for the children*
- > *Watch the little buggers every second.*
- > *Be aware where your children are playing at the water's edge.*
- > *Stay alert! Stay off your phones.*
- > *Never take your eyes off them, no chat groups, total focus, you are their safety equipment.*

Only one in seven (15%) said the caregiver should actually be within reach of the children.

- > *Keep your eyes constantly on them and go with them into the water.*
- > *Don't let them out of your sight or easy reach*
- > *Never, never take your eyes off them. Stay within arm's reach. Remember that river currents, waves and undertow are *much* bigger to small bodies, and little kids are top-heavy and don't float well. They're far more likely to be knocked off balance or pulled under.*
- > *Have a designated person always responsible for watching them at all times, make sure everyone knows a child particularly can get into trouble and drown in just a few seconds, keep them within a few meters at all times, preferably equip them with water wings/ flotation devices, check that the water is safe for them (eg no toxic algae, blue bottles etc), make sure children have no access to water unsupervised.*

A few raised other safety issues:

- > *Watch them ALL THE TIME. Teach them not to go out of your eye-shot. Empty pools/large containers/baths etc when you're finished - kids die!! Don't let other kids be in charge of kids - you're the adult it's YOUR responsibility to keep them SAFE!!*
- > *That it only needs 3 cm of water for kids to drown in.*
- > *Make sure the water is well fenced off or you are in water with them.*
- > *Keep them in sight at all times, help teach them to be competent in the water, tell them of the dangers associated with water.*

4.2 Safety at the beach

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they...

Visit a beach for swimming or surfing?

Swim between flags (if patrolled)/on patrolled beaches	56%
Be careful of/watch: rips/tides/currents <i>Also watch rocks/weather/hazards - go out in good/safe conditions</i>	24%
Know your limits - use common sense <i>Don't go out too far - safe depth</i>	10%
Stay near people/group/not alone <i>Watch out for others/your mates</i>	6%
Be prepared/know the beach/know what to do/ <i>Know how to swim/if caught in rip/ask locals advice/aware of surroundings</i>	5%
Follow safety signs/life guard instructions	3%
Supervision/of children	3%
Wear life jackets/safety gear/swim wear	2%
Tell someone where you're going	1%
Don't know	14%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Over half (56%) mentioned you should swim between the flags at the beach.

- > *Swim between the flags, watch for rips, know your limits if in doubt, stay out!*
- > *Swim between the flags where lifeguards can see you.*
- > *Swim between the flags. Don't go too far out. Stay within your ability level.*

A quarter (24%) commented on the need to be careful and watch for hazards like rips, tides and strong currents.

- > *Swim between the flags, be competent in the water, don't take risks when the conditions are beyond your competence, be aware of the hazards.*
- > *Swim between the flags, never swim in calm areas/rips, if caught in a rip go out with it, then swim parallel to the beach and back in to clear the rip.*
- > *Stay within flags or make sure you stay with people and avoid rips and giant waves unless a lifeguard is on hand or with other capable swimmers.*
- > *Swim between flags, watch for rips. If caught in rip let it take you out and swim diagonally out of it and then back to shore. Hand up if in difficulty.*
- > *Know your physical ability in the water and be aware of the strength of cross-currents and the ebb and flow of the undertows.*

Fewer mentioned other safety issues such as knowing your limits, not going alone, being prepared, telling people where you are going, wearing safe swim wear and minding children.

- > *Swim between the flags, check conditions and ask locals where currents and rips are.*
- > *Take a mate or two, and beware of rips.*
- > *Swim between the flags. If there aren't flags, look *carefully* for rips or odd-looking areas in the surf. ALWAYS keep kids in arms' reach. Respect the undertow.*
- > *Be able to swim. Swim within flags. Know how to get out of a rip. Adults watch children always.*
- > *Leave plans & timing with someone, check weather forecast with met.services, have a reliable map of area/ or rely on lifeguards and swim between flags, wear safe swim wear and don't play with unsafe equipment like lilos, have a communication device, have an emergency plan, if swimming at an isolated area have flares/a beacon, preferably don't go alone.*

4.3 Recreational water sports safety

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they... Take part in recreational water sports? Canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing, wind surfing, etc.

Wear life jacket <i>Safety vest/buoyancy vest/floatation device/sound equipment</i>	60%
Be safe <i>Go with experienced people/not alone/watch out for others</i>	14%
Check water conditions <i>Obtain weather report/watch the tide /pay attention</i>	6%
Know the safety guidelines <i>Follow the rules/listen to your instructor</i>	4%
Be sensible/know your limits	3%
Know/learn to swim <i>Get some training</i>	2%
Avoid drinking alcohol	0.4%
Don't know	22%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

The strongest safety message associated with recreational water sports was to wear a life jacket – mentioned by 60%.

- > *Wearing the proper life-jackets that fit.*
- > *Wear life jacket and learn the rules.*

The second strongest theme was to go with others (preferably experienced) and watch out for everyone (14%).

- > *Wear a life vest. Learn to read the water, and respond appropriately. If you're with someone experienced, LISTEN to them. If you're the experienced one, don't take stupid risks - you'll get someone else hurt.*
- > *Make sure the equipment is up to date and that there are people present to help them if something goes wrong.*
- > *Have an experienced partner with you, have a life-jacket, practice the protocol for how to get out of dangerous situations.*
- > *Stay together, learn the rules, use safety gear.*
- > *Make sure users are competent before challenging themselves with more testing conditions. Wear life jackets.*

A few mentioned the importance of checking the weather conditions (6%).

- > *Leave plans & timing with someone on shore, check weather forecast with met services, have a reliable marine/water map of area, wear lifejackets and appropriate clothing, have a communication device, have flares/beacon and an emergency plan, preferably don't go alone.*
- > *Check the weather conditions, wear the appropriate safety gear, go with a group.*
- > *Be constantly aware of everything going on around you and appraise weather conditions before setting out*
- > *Note the weather report and keep an eye on swimmers, wear your lifejacket.*

4.4 Safety visiting the wild coastline or rocks

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they...

Visit the wild coastline or rocks? Walking, fishing etc.

Take care: stay on the track/off the edge/rocks <i>Read safety notices/obey instructions/ wear safety gear/be prepared</i>	18%
Coastline/waves can be unpredictable <i>Watch for rogue waves/water conditions/don't turn your back to the sea</i>	18%
Know the tide times	17%
Don't go alone <i>Take buddy/tell somebody your plans</i>	9%
Wear sensible footwear/clothing	7%
Wear a life jacket	6%
Watch where you walk/for slippery or loose rocks/maintain your footing	5%
Be aware/watch out/watch children	4%
Know the weather forecast/day light	4%
Use common sense/don't do stupid things <i>Don't take unnecessary risk/don't fall in</i>	4%
Don't know	27%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Almost a fifth (18%) mentioned taking care by staying on the track, following safety notices and being prepared:

- > *Talk to locals, other people/fisherman, be aware of dangers, no weather and tide, NEVER turn your back on waves, inflatable lifejackets take up little room and are quite cheap.*
- > *Wear proper footwear; wear proper life jackets if fishing; read the notice boards at location & obey the instructions*
- > *Stick to main path, stay away from water.*
- > *Stay away if rough, make sure you are wearing suitable clothing and footwear and have an escape route.*
- > *Don't take your eyes off of the children, don't go to close to the edge and be aware and thoughtful of the rocks before you step on them to judge if they will actually hold your weight*

Another 18% commented on the coastline being unpredictable and the need to watch out for the waves:

- > *Don't go too close to the edge a wave could sweep you off.*
- > *Don't go close to sea line - be aware of rogue waves.*

17% mentioned checking the tides:

- > *Check the tides, don't go alone and use your common sense at how close to get to the water.*
- > *Be aware of the tide, be wary of cliff edges, slippery rocks.*

Others mentioned the importance of going with someone, or having sensible shoes.

- > *Don't go too close to the water especially if it's rough or you're not a good swimmer. Don't go by yourself.*
- > *Wear sturdy shoes with good grip. Where possibly try to avoid rocks that are particularly slippery looking.*

4.5 Visiting estuaries or tidal areas

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they... Visit estuaries or tidal areas? Walking, food gathering etc.

Check/know the tide times <i>Watch the tide/water/rips/don't turn your back to the sea</i>	39%
Keep safe: Be careful/aware <i>Check conditions/slippery/watch where walking/stay on track/read signs</i>	16%
Always go with someone/watch out for each other <i>Tell somebody where you go</i>	8%
Check the weather/weather report/conditions	3%
Watch the children	2%
Wear life jacket/ safety vest	2%
Wear suitable footwear/clothes/proper/safety gear	2%
Be sensible/don't take unnecessary risks <i>Don't be stupid/know your limit/no alcohol or drugs</i>	1%
Don't know	36%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Two-fifths (39%) mentioned the main safety tip they remember for visiting estuaries and tidal areas is to know the tide times.

- > *Know the tide. Watch the tide. Be careful of soft spots.*
- > *Check the tides and make sure can get back out again.*
- > *Be aware of the tides, they can move faster than you can.*
- > *Be aware of the tides, go with a group, familiarise yourself with the area.*

Around one in six commented on the need to keep safe and be careful where walking (16%).

- > *Be aware of surroundings and potential hazards.*
- > *Keep an eye on the tides, watch footing.*
- > *Watch where you're walking, stay away from cliffs.*
- > *Read any signs or ask the locals. Understand and know the conditions of where you are going*

Some also mentioned other aspects of being prepared, including that it's safer to go with people, check the weather, dress appropriately, and always watch children closely.

- > *Be aware of dangers eg tides, stay together, don't lose contact with anyone in your group.*
- > *Keep a watchful eye on the conditions*
- > *Watch out water can be deceptive, listen to weather forecast.*
- > *Remember the tides - they can come in fast and hard in some areas, and you'll be stranded before you know it. Keep an eye on kids, always. If gathering food, make sure it's a safe area (no nasty sewage outlets, no toxic seafood warnings). Watch your footing - the sand/mud is not always as stable as it looks.*
- > *Leave plans & timing with someone on shore, check weather forecast with met services, have a reliable map of area, wear lifejackets, have a communication device, have flares/beacon and an emergency plan, preferably don't go alone, wear appropriate clothing. Many drownings have occurred with gumboots.*

4.6 Recreational boating safety

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they...

Go out recreational boating?

Total: Wear life jacket, be prepared & have communication device	80%
Life jackets – wear a life jacket	77%
Be prepared - have emergency/safety equipment <i>Location beacon/flares/GPS/radar/safe, well-maintained boat/safety training</i>	7%
Have communication device - radio/VHF/mobile phone	4%
Check the weather	6%
Advise people of plans <i>Let someone know/submit trip report/don't go alone</i>	6%
Be cautious/follow the rules <i>Watch your speed/don't be stupid/experienced skipper/watch out for others/know your limits</i>	4%
No alcohol/drugs	2%
Know the tides/water conditions	2%
Don't overload boat	1%
Don't know	15%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

More than three-quarters (77%) mentioned life jackets as a main safety requirement for recreational boating.

- > *Wear a life vest. They're not pretty, but they keep you alive. Carry flares if you have them, and if you don't, get some. Carry a radio if possible, or at the very least have your cell phone (if it has reception) in a waterproof bag. If you're in a power boat, watch out for swimmers, water skiers and other water users, including wildlife. Know your maritime laws and follow them.*
- > *Wear a life jacket. Don't go by yourself. Tell other people at home when you'll be back and stick to it! Don't drink and drive the boat. If it's your boat - you're the Captain so make sure your crew are safe and not calling the shots*

Fewer commented on other safety aspects like having emergency safety equipment, communication devices, checking the weather and advising of plans (all less than 8%).

- > *Wear proper life jackets, make sure someone knows exactly where you are and what time you are expected to return; bring fully charged mobile phone in a water proof bag; bring a location beacon.*
- > *WEAR lifejacket at all times, don't go alone, tell people where and when you are, have 2+ methods of communication, more than one person on boat able to operate boat, boat captain responsible for all, know weather, tides, wave action etc.*
- > *Wear a life jacket. Make sure boat / vessel isn't overcrowded. Ensure Captain / Operator of vessel is Alcohol Free.*
- > *Safety procedures. Safe and well maintained craft, all wearing life savers, and communication devices, inform someone of all the activities one is undertaking, time of departure and return. Research the current and upcoming weather conditions prior to departure. Where possible inform the local water safety authority of your plans.*
- > *Leave plans & timing with someone on shore, check weather forecast with met services, have a reliable marine/water map of area, wear lifejackets and appropriate clothing, have a communication device, have flares/beacon and an emergency plan, preferably don't go alone.*
- > *Check weather, tides and have lifejackets, communication tool and well maintained boat*
- > *Make sure your engine are all working fine, have safety equipment, always wear life jacket and make sure you are with someone who knows how to properly drive a boat.*

4.7 Visiting rivers safely

What are the main safety tips people should remember when they...

Visit rivers for recreation? Swimming, fishing, tramping, walking etc.

Check for hazards - water depth/currents/under water - and act appropriately <i>Safe crossings/swimming</i>	33%
Have people with you/not alone <i>Take a buddy/swim with others/supervision/tell someone/communicate/cell phone</i>	14%
Take care/be sensible/don't take unnecessary risks <i>Stick to paths/stay within boundaries/read the signs/observe rules/guidelines</i>	13%
Be well equipped - have the right gear <i>Proper foot wear/clothing/experience/life jackets/safety gear</i>	8%
Know the area/conditions/know your limits <i>Learn river craft skills/swimming</i>	7%
Check the weather	6%
Watch children	2%
Don't know	29%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

A third (33%) mentioned that people should check for hazards when visiting rivers and act appropriately.

- > *River currents and depth are unpredictable.*
- > *Watch stepping if crossing rivers as rocks can be slippery. Watch for eddies and rapids and large hidden rocks.*
- > *Watch for rocks, don't jump off into water if you can't see what's immediately under the water*
- > *Note depth and don't dive unless absolutely sure it's safe*
- > *Learn to read the river, and don't go in if you're not sure what you're seeing. Don't ever take risks with floodwaters. Watch for crumbling riverbanks, they'll get you every time. If you're wading or swimming, watch for drop-offs and snags. They can pull you under before you know they're there.*
- > *Check weather, watch for rising rivers, don't dive into pools without checking depth.*

Around one in seven (14%) said it is good to go with others.

- > *Do not underestimate the power of water, have others with you and take care not to get out of your comfort zone if you are not a strong swimmer.*
- > *Tell people where you are going, go with a group of people, get to know the area or take a map, check for hazards.*

A similar proportion (13%) commented on the need to avoid unnecessary risks:

- > *Take care, use common sense.*
- > *Stay on the beaten track and read the signs.*
- > *Look before you dive. Rocks are slippery. Rushing water is powerful. Don't go in if you can't swim!!*

Fewer mentioned being properly equipped, knowledgeable, or watching weather and children.

- > *Check the weather forecast and be aware that rivers can rise rapidly and that rivers can be dangerous and swift flowing.*
- > *Be prepared let others know where you are and will be back, have correct clothing, food, equipment.*
- > *If you don't know the river then don't swim in it. Weeds can trap you underwater.*
- > *Always be watching for children and those who can't swim.*

4.8 Is the message getting through to the appropriate groups?

This section explores the main safety tips identified by the public in terms of:

- The types of activities that they have undertaken in the past 12 months in New Zealand
- Specific related activities, and their risk profile for that activity
- First-hand experience of a serious situation in the water.

In the tables below, **bold red** indicates a result that is statistically significantly **below** the result for the whole of the NZ Public. **bold blue** indicates result that is statistically significantly **above** the result for the whole of the NZ Public.

Recall of main safety tips for recreational boating

	“Wear a life jacket”	“Be prepared”	N=
New Zealand public	77%	7%	1000
Boaties	74%	9%	137
No risk boaties	80%	13%	45
Low risk	72%	9%	57
Med risk	86%	0%	22
High risk	46%	8%	13
All risk boaties	72%	7%	92
Swimming	80%	6%	584
Wading /paddling in water	85%	8%	499
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	77%	8%	176
Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	78%	7%	105
Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	72%	12%	98
Accidentally fallen in water	70%	4%	46
Sailing	63%	8%	48
Power boating, jet skiing	78%	9%	108
Fishing, food gathering	82%	8%	244
Looked after a pre-schooler	80%	8%	332
None of these	71%	7%	199
First-hand			
Yes – experienced serious situation	82%	8%	333
No experience	75%	7%	635
Don’t know	63%	6%	32

More than three-quarters of the general public (77%) mentioned that wearing a life jacket is a good safety tip for recreational boating.

The groups less likely than the general public to have mentioned wearing a life jacket were:

- High risk boaties (46% compared to 77% of the public)
- People who had been sailing in the past 12 months (63%)

Those more likely to have mentioned wearing life jackets were:

- People who had been wading or paddling (85%)
- People who had first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water (82%)

Recall of main safety tips for being around water with young children

	“Always supervise”	“Stay within arm’s length”	N=
New Zealand public	74%	15%	1000
Risk profile			
Pre-school caregivers	75%	21%	332
No Risk caregivers	33%	33%	3
Low	74%	23%	227
Med	76%	17%	101
High	100%	0%	1
All Risk caregivers	75%	21%	329
Water related activities			
Swimming	74%	18%	584
Wading /paddling in water	78%	17%	499
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	69%	16%	176
Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	70%	21%	105
Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	78%	14%	98
Accidentally fallen in water	65%	11%	46
Sailing	73%	15%	48
Power boating, jet skiing	80%	9%	108
Fishing, food gathering	75%	16%	244
Looked after a pre-schooler	75%	21%	332
None of these	69%	12%	199
First-hand			
Yes – experienced serious situation	80%	15%	333
No experience	71%	16%	635
Don’t know	63%	6%	32

Three-quarters of the general public said it’s important to supervise young children around water (74%), and fifteen percent commented specifically on staying within reach.

- Pre-school caregivers were more likely than others to mention that “staying within arm’s length” is important with young children around water (21%).
- People who have experienced a serious situation first-hand were more likely to mention the importance of always supervising children around water (80%).

Recall of main safety tips for taking part in recreational water sports, canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing, wind surfing etc.

	“Wear a life jacket”	“Be safe, go with experienced people/ a group”	N=
New Zealand public	60%	14%	1000
Water sports participants	61%	14%	275
Risk profile			
No Risk participants	65%	12%	142
Low	48%	24%	21
Med	63%	18%	65
High	53%	9%	47
All Risk participants	57%	16%	133
Water related activities			
Swimming	63%	13%	584
Wading /paddling in water	68%	15%	499
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	62%	16%	176
Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	61%	14%	105
Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	63%	10%	98
Accidentally fallen in water	48%	17%	46
Sailing	52%	17%	48
Power boating, jet skiing	63%	12%	108
Fishing, food gathering	64%	13%	244
Looked after a pre-schooler	66%	16%	332
None of these	53%	15%	199
First-hand			
Yes – experienced serious situation	66%	17%	333
No experience	58%	13%	635
Don’t know	44%	16%	32

Three-fifths (60%) of the public said that it’s a good safety measure to wear a life jacket when participating in water sports like kayaking etc.

- People who have been wading or paddling in the water were more likely to mention life jackets (68%).
- Those who have not done any of the water related activities mentioned were less likely to have commented on life jackets (53%).

Recall of main safety tips for visiting a beach for swimming or surfing

	“Swim between the flags”	“Be careful, watch for rips, tides, currents”	N=
New Zealand public	56%	24%	1000
Swimmers	59%	26%	388
No Risk swimmers	67%	22%	187
Low	48%	34%	106
Med	59%	24%	70
High	44%	16%	25
All Risk swimmers	51%	28%	201
Water related activities			
Swimming	58%	25%	584
Wading /paddling in water	63%	28%	499
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	51%	26%	176
Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	51%	27%	105
Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	55%	20%	98
Accidentally fallen in water	43%	26%	46
Sailing	56%	17%	48
Power boating, jet skiing	48%	28%	108
Fishing, food gathering	55%	30%	244
Looked after a pre-schooler	59%	26%	332
None of these	49%	23%	199
First-hand			
Yes – experienced serious situation	62%	29%	333
No experience	54%	21%	635
Don’t know	38%	25%	32

Over half the public (56%) said that it’s a good idea to swim between the flags when visiting a beach for swimming or surfing, and a quarter (24%) mentioned being careful and watching out for rips, tides and currents.

- Swimmers identified as being at no risk, i.e. they always follow the safety rules were more likely to have mentioned swimming between the flags (67%).
- Low risk swimmers were more likely to have commented on watching out for rips and tides (34%).

Recall of main safety tips for visiting estuaries or tidal areas

	“Check/know the tide times”	“Keep safe. Be careful and aware, check conditions”	N=
New Zealand public	39%	16%	1000
Risk profile			
Fishers	45%	17%	244
No Risk fishers	52%	7%	27
Low	47%	14%	57
Med	44%	21%	147
High	31%	8%	13
All Risk fishers	44%	18%	217
Water related activities			
Swimming	39%	16%	584
Wading /paddling in water	45%	16%	499
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	33%	16%	176
Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	40%	13%	105
Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	36%	14%	98
Accidentally fallen in water	26%	20%	46
Sailing	46%	4%	48
Power boating, jet skiing	44%	13%	108
Fishing, food gathering	45%	17%	244
Looked after a pre-schooler	42%	20%	332
None of these	37%	17%	199
First-hand			
Yes – experienced serious situation	46%	19%	333
No experience	36%	15%	635
Don’t know	22%	13%	32

Two-fifths of the public (39%) mentioned that it’s important to check or know the tide times when visiting estuaries or tidal areas. Around one in six (16%) commented on the importance of being aware, careful and checking conditions.

- Respondents who had first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water were more likely to mention tide-times (46%), as were people who have been wading or paddling in the water (45%).
- Those who have been sailing in the past 12 months were less likely to mention the importance of keeping safe by checking conditions when visiting tidal areas (4%), but just under half mentioned checking tide-times (46%).

Recall of main safety tips for visiting rivers for recreation

		“Check for hazards”	“Take a buddy”	“Take care, be sensible”	N=
	New Zealand public	33%	14%	13%	1000
Risk profile	Fishers	41%	14%	13%	244
	No Risk fishers	44%	15%	15%	27
	Low	47%	11%	9%	57
	Med	38%	16%	14%	147
	High	31%	0%	8%	13
	All Risk fishers	40%	14%	12%	217
Risk profile	Swimmers	37%	14%	13%	388
	No Risk swimmers	40%	16%	10%	187
	Low	35%	13%	16%	106
	Med	37%	10%	14%	70
	High	20%	16%	16%	25
	All Risk swimmers	34%	12%	15%	201
Water related activities	Swimming	36%	15%	13%	584
	Wading /paddling in water	42%	17%	11%	499
	Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	36%	13%	13%	176
	Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	41%	10%	12%	105
	Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	35%	13%	10%	98
	Accidentally fallen in water	30%	13%	7%	46
	Sailing	29%	19%	10%	48
	Power boating, jet skiing	39%	10%	18%	108
	Fishing, food gathering	41%	14%	13%	244
	Looked after a pre-schooler	35%	19%	13%	332
	None of these	24%	12%	12%	199
First-hand	Yes – experienced serious situation	38%	16%	15%	333
	No experience	30%	13%	11%	635
	Don't know	25%	6%	13%	32

A third of the public (33%) suggested checking for hazards when visiting rivers for recreation, while fourteen percent said it's good to take a buddy.

- Fishers were more likely to mention looking for hazards (41%), as were very careful (no risk) swimmers (40%), and waders (42%).
- People who have looked after a pre-schooler in the past 12 months were more likely than others (19%) to have suggested taking a buddy (not going alone) when visiting rivers.

Recall of main safety tips for visiting the wild coastline or rocks

		“Take care, stay on the track, off the rocks”	“Coastline waves can be unpredictable”	“Know the tide times”	N=
	New Zealand public	18%	18%	17%	1000
Risk profile	Fishers	18%	23%	22%	244
	No Risk fishers	26%	19%	11%	27
	Low	14%	12%	21%	57
	Med	20%	27%	24%	147
	High	0%	31%	23%	13
	All Risk fishers	17%	24%	24%	217
Risk profile	Swimmers	21%	18%	15%	388
	No Risk swimmers	22%	18%	16%	187
	Low	20%	23%	15%	106
	Med	24%	11%	13%	70
	High	8%	24%	8%	25
	All Risk swimmers	20%	19%	13%	201
Water related activities	Swimming	20%	18%	16%	584
	Wading /paddling in water	20%	20%	21%	499
	Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, stand up paddleboarding	19%	18%	18%	176
	Surfing, boogie boarding, wind surfing	18%	22%	14%	105
	Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)	21%	20%	17%	98
	Accidentally fallen in water	17%	20%	15%	46
	Sailing	6%	13%	27%	48
	Power boating, jet skiing	19%	21%	20%	108
	Fishing, food gathering	18%	23%	22%	244
	Looked after a pre-schooler	23%	19%	19%	332
	None of these	17%	13%	15%	199
First-hand	Yes – experienced serious situation	17%	24%	22%	333
	No experience	19%	15%	14%	635
	Don't know	19%	13%	9%	32

Under a fifth (18%) of the general public mentioned the importance of taking care and staying on the track when visiting the wild coastline, and similar proportions commented on the waves being unpredictable (18%) and knowing the tide times (17%).

- Fishers (22%) and waders (21%), were more likely to comment on the necessity of checking tide times.
- Those who have personal experience of a serious situation were more likely to mention being wary of coastal waves (24%) and tides (22%).

5. Attitudes

5.1 Public opinion towards water safety issues

The public were asked to indicate their opinions on a range of water safety issues.

How much do you agree or disagree?

	Total Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Children under 5 years of age should be actively supervised around water at all times	96%	2%	0%	2%	12%	84%
Lifejackets should be compulsory for children to wear on water craft of 6m or less (jet skis, kayaks, dinghies etc.)	95%	1%	1%	3%	22%	73%
Individuals need to take more responsibility for their own water safety	95%	1%	0%	4%	29%	65%
There should be alcohol limits for people in charge of boats or water craft (jet skis, kayaks etc.), just like for motor vehicles	93%	1%	1%	5%	20%	73%
Water survival skills should be a compulsory subject at primary school	91%	4%	1%	4%	24%	67%
All schools should have access to swimming pools	90%	0%	1%	9%	36%	54%
Lifejackets should be compulsory for everyone to wear on water craft of 6m or less (jet skis, kayaks, dinghies etc.)	89%	1%	2%	8%	23%	67%
Most drownings are preventable	86%	1%	1%	12%	48%	38%
There should be licences for people using boats and watercraft (to make sure they know how to do so safely)	80%	1%	5%	14%	35%	45%
Government and local councils need to do more to improve water safety in New Zealand	77%	1%	3%	19%	40%	37%
Every swimming pool in New Zealand should be fenced	69%	2%	7%	23%	29%	39%
Most people I know take water safety seriously	62%	1%	7%	30%	47%	15%
Most New Zealanders have been taught the skills to survive if they accidentally end up in the water	22%	7%	37%	35%	18%	4%

True n=1,000

Demographic variations

Somewhat concerning is that **caregivers of preschool children** were less likely to agree that:

- Water survival skills should be a compulsory subject at primary school (85%)
- Children under 5 years of age should be actively supervised... (90%)
- Individuals need to take more responsibility for their own water safety (91%)
- Lifejackets should be compulsory for children to wear... (89%)
- There should be alcohol limits for people in charge of boats... (87%)

Women were more likely to agree with most of the statements than men (in no cases were they less likely to agree).

Aucklanders were less likely to agree that:

- Water survival skills should be a compulsory subject at primary school (87%)
- Lifejackets should be compulsory for children to wear on... (92%)
- Lifejackets should be compulsory for everyone to wear on water.... (84%)
- There should be alcohol limits for people in charge of boats... (90%)

They were more likely to think that:

- Most New Zealanders have been taught the skills to survive... (30%)

Rest of the South Island were more likely to agree that:

- Water survival skills should be a compulsory subject at primary school (95%)

5.2 Public support for teaching water safety skills to primary school children

The next questions were designed to measure public support for the implementation of teaching water safety skills to primary school children.

Seven out of ten members of the general public (71%) rated “Water safety and knowledge” as one of the first three skills that should be learnt. This was followed by “Basic movements through the water” rated in top three by over two-thirds (68%).

Which of these skills should primary school children (5 to 13 year olds) learn first?

	Rating out of 6	Top 3
Water safety and knowledge E.g. knowledge of rules for safe behaviour, hazards and risks around all water environments and activities	4.4	71%
Basic movements through the water E.g. on their front, side or back	4.1	68%
Personal survival skills E.g. treading water, floating, how to fit and use a life jacket	3.7	56%
Safe entry and exit skills E.g. getting into and out of all water environments (pools, rivers, lakes, beaches etc.)	3.5	48%
Swimming skills E.g. able to swim up to 200 metres.	3.5	48%
Rescue skills E.g. so they are able to be rescued or rescue a buddy	1.8	9%

Respondents ranked the 6 skills by order in which they should be taught.

Rating out of 6 is a weighted ranking.

Top 3 shows all who rated the skill in their first 3 to be taught.

What do caregivers think?

Caregivers had similar responses to the rest of the population.

	Caregivers (Not pre-school)	Pre-school Caregivers	Not Caregivers	National
Rating out of 6				
Water safety and knowledge	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4
Basic movements through the water	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1
Personal survival skills	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.7
Safe entry and exit skills	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5
Swimming skills	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.5
Rescue skills	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8
Top 3				
Water safety and knowledge				
E.g. knowledge of rules for safe behaviour, hazards and risks around all water environments and activities	76%	73%	68%	71%
Basic movements through the water				
E.g. on their front, side or back	66%	68%	68%	68%
Personal survival skills				
E.g. treading water, floating, how to fit and use a life jacket	53%	51%	58%	56%
Safe entry and exit skills				
E.g. getting into and out of all water environments (pools, rivers, lakes, beaches etc.)	46%	53%	48%	48%
Swimming skills				
E.g. able to swim up to 200 metres.	49%	43%	50%	48%
Rescue skills				
E.g. so they are able to be rescued or rescue a buddy	11%	11%	8%	9%
True n=	201	149	650	1000

5.3 Public attitudes towards unsafe practices

The public were asked to give reasons for why they think some people don't learn to swim, wear life jackets, have the required safety equipment on their boat, and check water conditions are safe.

These questions were unprompted and asked for comments (free-text answers). The answers given were coded thematically and a summary of the main factors is shown below.

In many answers respondents mentioned more than one theme, and these have been coded separately. More details and examples of the comments follow.

Main reasons why the New Zealand public think some people don't...

Learn to swim:

Lack of opportunity <i>No access to pools/lack of facilities/resources</i>	29%
Afraid of water <i>Lack confidence/don't like the water/swimming/bad experience</i>	27%
It's too expensive <i>Can't afford swimming lessons/lack of funding</i>	25%

Wear a life jacket:

Ignorance/don't need one/over-confident/underestimate conditions <i>Nothing will happen to me/invincible/unnecessary</i>	38%
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Have the required safety equipment on board their boat:

Too expensive <i>Lack of money/cost/can't afford it</i>	38%
Stupidity/lazy <i>Careless/arrogant/irresponsible</i>	31%
No awareness <i>Ignorance/lack of knowledge/experience</i>	26%

Check the water conditions are safe:

Too stupid <i>Too lazy/careless/forget</i>	40%
Unaware of risk/lack knowledge <i>Lack education/experience/impatient - just want to get out</i>	33%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

5.4 Barriers to learning to swim

The public were asked why they think some people don't learn to swim.

Why do you think some people don't...

Learn to swim?

Lack of opportunity <i>No access to pools/lack of facilities/resources</i>	29%
Afraid of water <i>Lack confidence/don't like the water/swimming/bad experience</i>	27%
It's too expensive <i>Can't afford swimming lessons/lack of funding</i>	25%
Too lazy/too hard/no time <i>Can't be bothered/too old to learn/not interested</i>	20%
Lack of safety awareness: Don't think they need to learn to swim <i>Not important/not a priority for parents</i>	14%
No school pools <i>Not taught as a child at school</i>	9%
Embarrassed/cultural reasons/modesty <i>Self-conscious in swimming suit/scared of teasing/physical disability/health issues</i>	5%
Don't know/unsure	6%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Almost three out of ten (29%) said the reason why some people don't learn to swim is the lack of opportunity – no nearby facilities.

- > *They don't have access to a pool or don't feel comfortable in togs.*
- > *They did not have the opportunity to swim. Or are embarrassed to learn to swim as an adult.*
- > *Lack of opportunity, cost of swimming lessons, afraid of water, parents can't be bothered to make the effort to teach children or take them to lessons.*
- > *No time, no opportunity to do so, people like myself learnt to swim when younger but have lost the skill as never had the opportunities to swim constantly growing up in Sth Auckland.*
- > *Cultural reasons, no opportunity (live too far from the coast, no pool).*

Over a quarter (27%) mentioned fear of water and lack of confidence.

- > *Fear of the water. Never learnt while young and too embarrassed to learn as an adult.*
- > *Afraid of the water, use the excuse that they haven't got time, are self-conscious of their bodies/size/weight, always had the competitive aspect of swimming emphasised when they were growing up, don't enjoy swimming, don't see the need, no access to cheap and reliable swimming coaching for the amount of time it takes to build the skill.*
- > *Fear of water, live inland and no school pool, parents too poor to afford lessons.*
- > *They are scared, have poor body coordination, are worried about being unable to breathe, are unhappy with their body.*

A quarter (25%) said cost is a barrier to learning to swim.

- > *They don't have access to lessons or can't afford it, not interested, don't think they need to learn to swim.*
- > *There is money involved that people just don't have to spare, or time issues. It also isn't accessible to all people.*
- > *Don't have access, not taught in schools and too expensive to pay to learn at local pools.*

- > *Cannot afford the cost of lessons, or think they are too old to learn, or don't think that they actually need it.*
- > *Can't afford to get into pools, lessons too expensive, don't have time. Don't think it's as important as it is. No access while in school.*
- > *Some people do not have access to pools. Or maybe cannot afford a swim suit.*
- > *The expense of going to pool/getting lessons. Perceived lack of time.*

A fifth (20%) commented that laziness or lack of time stop people learning to swim.

- > *Parental irresponsibility, lack of facilities at schools, pure laziness.*
- > *Lack of opportunity, cost of swimming lessons, afraid of water, parents can't be bothered to make the effort to teach children or take them to lessons.*

One in seven (14%) commented on a lack of safety awareness – people not thinking it is important and prioritising learning to swim.

- > *They don't think to go and get swimming lessons especially adults. It was great when Oscar Knightly shared his story. There should be more shared. The Pacific Islanders who migrate here don't know how to swim even though they are surrounded by water. They and Asians need to be educated. If kids in NZ learnt from primary school they are okay but by high school, PE is only compulsory for the first two years.*
- > *Disinterest or phobia. Perhaps feel that it's just something people do who love to swim - and perhaps swimming isn't a strong interest for them. Lack of introduction by family/friends/school.*
- > *Some people don't connect learning to swim with general water activities such as food gathering, fishing, boating and so on. I think they think that swimming is learning to compete with others in pools*
- > *Same reason some people don't get insurance. They think nothing will happen to them.*

Another issue raised included the lack of school pools.

- > *Parents don't take responsibility to teach their children either due to lack of funds or don't see it as their responsibility. Schools have to have strict rules round operating their pools now so they have abandoned the old fashioned learning to swim at school.*
- > *It's too expensive to do it at the council pool for lessons. There aren't swimming lessons at all schools any more. Lots of parents and adults can't swim/aren't good swimmers so they don't want to teach their kids.*
- > *Can't afford the lessons and pools harder to go to because of schools not having pools anymore.*

A few mentioned cultural, modesty and embarrassment issues.

- > *Cultural reasons eg. Not wanting to wear togs especially if you're an adult. Can't afford to or can't find the time.*
- > *Embarrassment if they are quite old and don't know how to, culture - some cultures it's normal not to know how to swim, don't swim often so don't see the point.*
- > *Cost, time, fear of wearing togs when others can see you (particularly women), lack of facilities, overcrowded public pools.*
- > *They are embarrassed to admit they can't swim as an adult, lack confidence.*

5.5 Barriers to wearing life jackets

The public were asked why they think some people don't wear a life jacket.

Why do you think some people don't...

Wear a life jacket?

Ignorance/don't need one/over-confident/underestimate conditions <i>Nothing will happen to me/invincible/unnecessary</i>	38%
Too much hassle <i>Lazy/can't be bothered</i>	16%
Stupidity <i>Carelessness/complacent/arrogance</i>	16%
Life jackets are expensive <i>No money/can't afford one</i>	14%
Uncool/unfashionable <i>Look silly/cultural influences</i>	13%
Uncomfortable/restrictive <i>Annoying/bulky/hot</i>	13%
Not on board/don't have one <i>Not available /not enough life jackets</i>	11%
Too macho/bravado	5%
Don't know/unsure	5%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Almost two-fifths (38%) of the public surveyed thought ignorance – being over confident and underestimating the conditions – was the reason why some people don't wear life jackets.

- > *Reasons I've heard put forward: "It's bulky. It looks dorky. It gets in the way (which is sometimes true, though less so with modern ones). I don't need it because I'm a strong swimmer. Its right over *there* -- I can get it if I need it! It's hot. We're just going across the harbour! We're only fishing ..." It all comes down to "It won't happen to *me* ..."*
- > *Stupidity, ignorance, macho behaviour, insistence on their "rights", bloody mindedness.*
- > *Overestimate their swimming abilities, think they're too cool, don't have one/too expensive, people think they won't get into a bad situation.*
- > *Don't think it will happen to them, too blasé.*
- > *Unaware of the importance with needing to wear one, no money.*

Around one in six said life jackets are too much hassle.

- > *Too lazy, can't afford one, think they restrict movement, think they are good enough to not need one.*
- > *Find it a hassle/annoying when doing activities. May think that they don't need one*
- > *Mostly out of habit. They have never worn one before and can't see why they should where one now lazy.*
- > *Laziness, bullheadedness, cost, getting jibes from mates, she'll be right attitude.*

Another one in six mentioned that stupidity plays a role.

- > *Stupidity. Frankly I cannot think of any other reason. May be uncomfortable. But will you sacrifice safety for comfort.*
- > *They don't think they are in any danger, think they know better, stupid!*
- > *Overconfidence/stupidity/ignorance.*
- > *Stupid, like taking a blind corner at high speed. No brains. There's one born every day.*

Some said life jackets are expensive.

- > *Maybe they consider them too expensive? Forget to bring them? Think it makes them 'less of a man'? Lifejackets may not be available.*
- > *Expensive, or don't have access to them so just go out without one.*
- > *Can't afford them, are too cool to wear one, not compulsory.*
- > *Overestimate their swimming abilities, think they're too cool, don't have one/too expensive, people think they won't get into a bad situation.*
- > *Uncomfortable. Cost of lifejackets. Don't have any. Don't want to look silly. Don't think they need them.*
- > *They can't afford one, think they don't need one or feel they restrict movement.*

Others mentioned they are uncool and unfashionable.

- > *Too 'cool' to wear it. Don't believe they could have an accident. It's impractical during some activities.*
- > *Cost. The feeling of bulkiness. Not cool to wear. Invincibility.*
- > *Cost, "she'll be right" attitude, too uncomfortable, too unfashionable etc.*
- > *Because they are worried about looking dumb and they think they can swim better than they actually can.*

Some commented life jackets are uncomfortable and restrictive.

- > *They are uncomfortable to wear. They restrict body and arm movement. IF other people are not wearing them, they feel like they don't need to either, and they would look different if they did.*
- > *Restrictive and possibly hot and uncomfortable to wear all the time. Possibly they over estimate their own abilities.*
- > *Uncomfortable and it looks like you are incapable of saving yourself, looks a bit weak or like you are scared*
- > *Because they act so macho, and think drowning can never happen to them.*
- > *Because they are uncomfortable, look ugly, can be a hassle and are expensive.*

Just over one in ten (11%) thought some people don't wear life jackets because they don't have them or there are not enough.

- > *No education provided. None available at the time. Not a 'cool' look.*
- > *No access to one. Embarrassed to wear one.*
- > *Don't want to look like a wuss, don't own them.*
- > *Too expensive, think they won't need it, unexpected people come on the boat*
- > *Too expensive, overestimate their own water skills, don't have enough to go around*

Too macho/bravado

- > *Bravado. Men mainly. Drunk?*
- > *They think something bad won't happen to them. They are too macho/it doesn't look manly.*
- > *They are too gung-ho to require any safety precautions - or they are blatantly ignorant.*
- > *Bravado/ machismo and the "it won't happen to me" mentality.*
- > *Not a macho image.*
- > *Bravado. Used to paddle competitively in outriggers & placed trust in others. Life jackets should be compulsory, as was lucky in some hairy instances.*

5.6 Barriers to having the required safety equipment on boats

The public were asked why they think some people don't have the required safety equipment on board their boat.

Why do you think some people don't...

Have the required safety equipment on board their boat?

Too expensive <i>Lack of money/cost/can't afford it</i>	38%
Stupidity/lazy <i>Careless/arrogant/irresponsible</i>	31%
No awareness <i>Ignorance/lack of knowledge/experience</i>	26%
Overconfident <i>Casual/think they don't need it/nothing will happen to them</i>	16%
No requirement/needs to be mandatory/all the time	2%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Almost two-fifths (38%) commented that they think some people don't have the required safety equipment on their boats because they can't afford it.

- > *Can't afford, can't be bothered, and know they can get away with not having it.*
- > *Lack of money to buy such equipment, and overconfidence.*
- > *Can't afford it or that they think nothing bad will happen.*
- > *I think the boating industry often does not take health and safety seriously, or is trying to cut costs - these attitudes might extend to individuals too.*
- > *Cost of safety equipment or not aware of standard requirements that aren't enforced.*

Almost a third said that stupidity and carelessness are the reasons.

- > *Stupidity! Cost, ignorance, what mates will think.*
- > *Price, lazy and don't check, ignorant.*
- > *Laziness and don't think anything will happen to them. Not compulsory to have so why buy it?*
- > *Just plain stupidity, forgetfulness, arrogance "It won't happen to us".*
- > *Stupid irresponsible people do this.*

A quarter blamed lack of knowledge and experience.

- > *They don't know what they need, don't think they'll need it, too lazy.*
- > *Stupidity and lack of education on the subject, requiring a boat licence like a drivers licence would go a long way to preventing this.*
- > *Ignorance. Failing to take responsibility for the safety of people on their boat.*
- > *Irresponsible shouldn't be allowed. Need more information to let people know.*
- > *Unaware of what they actually need.*
- > *They have no knowledge about the appropriate safety equipment required in case of emergencies. Water safety equipment could be out of price range/expensive.*
- > *They aren't educated enough on the required safety requirements they need on their boat.*
- > *They are unaware of what the required safety equipment is, there isn't really enough information on this.*
- > *Lack of water safety knowledge and training.*
- > *Lack of thought about need for emergency equipment.*

A sixth mentioned overconfidence as a factor.

- > *Think it will never happen to them.*
- > *Bad attitude to safety. Think it won't happen to them. Expense.*
- > *Ignorance. Having the age old attitude that they're bullet proof.*
- > *Too lazy and underestimating conditions and themselves.*
- > *Laziness, macho-ness and broke-ness.*
- > *It's too expensive. We're not going far. All these government restrictions get in the way of having fun. We never had all this new-fangled gear back in my day! She'll be right, mate ...*

A few mentioned there is no legal requirement.

- > *Slack boat owners/unlicensed?*
- > *They shouldn't be able to drive the boat if they don't. A licence should be required to operate all boats.*
- > *That should be mandatory and should be registered then they could keep a record of who is obeying the law and then prosecute the bad ones.*
- > *Should not be allowed to leave the shore without all the equipment they should have.*

5.7 Barriers to checking water conditions are safe

The public were asked why they think some people don't check the water conditions are safe.

Why do you think some people don't...

Check the water conditions are safe?

Too stupid <i>Too lazy/careless/forget</i>	40%
Unaware of risk/lack knowledge <i>Lack education/experience/impatient - just want to get out</i>	33%
Overconfident/casual/ <i>Take things for granted/they know best/think weather will not change</i>	19%
No access to info/updates/internet connection	1%
Don't know/unsure	11%

Based on the public's comments, multiple themes coded separately **n=1,000**

Two-fifths (40%) said they think people are too stupid or lazy to check that water conditions are safe.

- > *Because they think they are 6 feet tall and bulletproof. Too lazy.*
- > *They're not thinking ahead. They're idiots.*
- > *Stupidity runs in some families, can't be stopped. People put vases with water in them on top of TVs like I have seen. Some lack common sense.*
- > *Stupid, don't know they should, under-estimate the dangers.*
- > *Stupid and not caring about their passengers.*

A third commented that some people don't check water conditions due to a lack of knowledge, education and experience, and are impatient to get out.

- > *Does not know how to do it, complacency, relying on government or council to warn them, doesn't want to look stupid not knowing the facts.*
- > *Lack of knowledge, male bravado.*
- > *Uneducated. Ignorant. Not bothered.*

- > *Uneducated, not under supervision.*
- > *Uneducated re water safety.*
- > *Because they want to go out on the water and will do so even if there is unsafe weather. Or don't think to check before going.*

A fifth though over-confidence was an issue.

- > *Decide they are going regardless and especially if with friends don't want to not go as it will look wimpy with their friends.*
- > *Underestimate dangers, overestimate their own water skills.*
- > *Think they know best. Only going out for a short time so "they'll be okay".*
- > *Think that they are more experienced that they can handle the conditions.*
- > *That's a common failing in general -- people *don't* check weather warnings before going out, as a rule, even though it's important for general safety. Going out on the water, it's even more important, but it's easy to look at the sky and assume all will be well. People also tend to forget or not understand the degree to which bodies of water react differently to weather conditions, so that (for instance) a bit of a breeze on the land can mean very choppy seas. And NZ blokey culture feeds into all of this -- one doesn't want to look like a wimp, staying home just because of a little weather warning.*

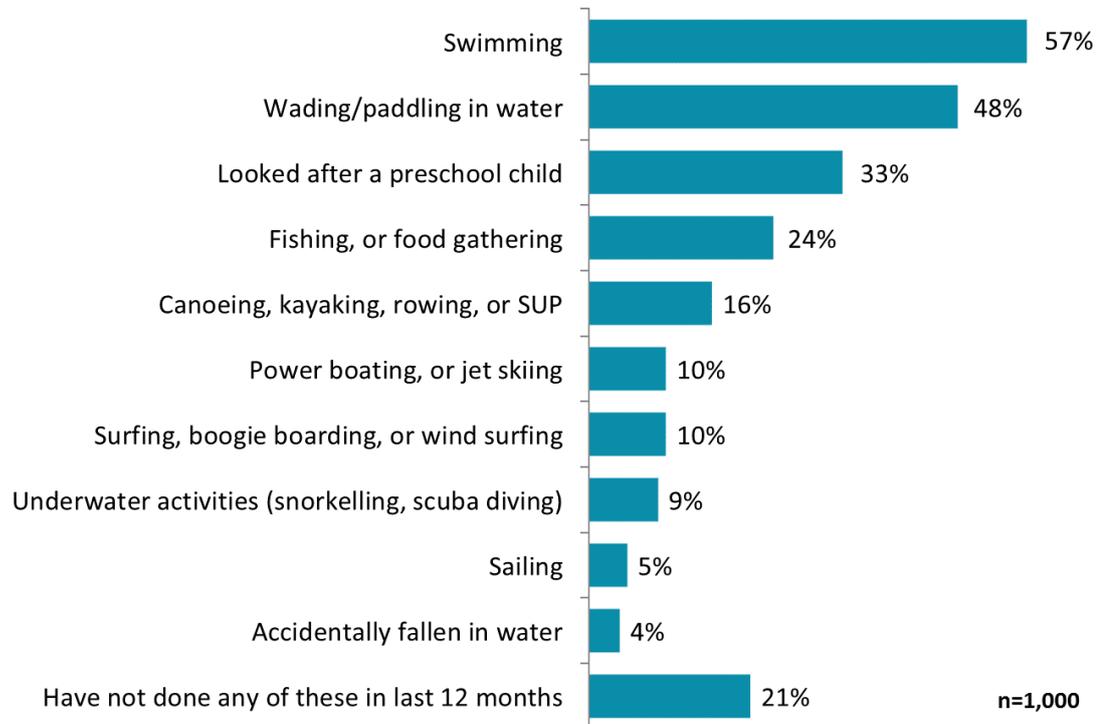
A few mentioned communication issues.

- > *They aren't able to access information on the spot. I.e. In the wilderness.*
- > *No satellite/ mobile data on boat.*
- > *No internet connection.*

6. Behaviour and risks

This section measures the proportion of New Zealanders who have engaged in water related activities (including potentially risky behaviours) in the last 12 months in New Zealand.

Which of these activities have you done in the last 12 months in New Zealand?



Demographic variations

The groups more likely to have been swimming were:

- Aucklanders - nearly two-thirds (64%) reported swimming in the past 12 months
- Pre-school caregivers were also big swimmers (66%)

Women were more likely to have:

- Looked after a preschool child 42%
- Been wading/paddling 55%

6.1 Swimming, and wading/ paddling

Overall, 57% had been swimming and 48% had been wading or paddling in the past 12 months.

- The most common places people went swimming were a public swimming pool (55%), patrolled beach (40%), unpatrolled beach (39%) or private swimming pool (35%)
- More than three-fifths (62%) had been paddling at an unpatrolled beach or coastline, 36% at a river or stream and 33% at a patrolled beach

Where have you been swimming, or wading/ paddling in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

	Swimming	Wading/paddling
Public swimming pool	55%	20%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	40%	33%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	39%	62%
Private swimming pool	35%	14%
River or stream	21%	36%
Lake or pond	20%	22%
School swimming pool	11%	6%
Off-shore or at sea	10%	8%
Harbour/Estuary	8%	15%
Paddling pool	6%	16%
Somewhere else	1%	2%
True n=	584	499

Patrolled beaches

At a patrolled beach (e.g. with life guards and a flag-marked safe swimming area):

How often do you...	Swim between the flags	Wade/paddle (or go in the water) between the flags
Always	40%	25%
Usually	44%	38%
Sometimes	15%	35%
Never	1%	3%
True n=	235	166

Reasons why the patrolled areas are not used

Respondents who indicated they had swum or waded/paddled at a patrolled New Zealand beach or coastline in the past 12 months, but had not always been between the flags were asked why.

What are the reasons you don't swim between the flags?

Flagged area too narrow and crowded <i>Too many people/feels more dangerous/inexperienced boogie boarders</i>	54%
I have skills/confident swimmer <i>I feel sure it's safe/better elsewhere/fun</i>	29%
Life guards gone/no flags/not aware	22%
I don't go deep/stay close beside patrolled area	9%
Sometimes drift from flags	8%
Not convenient/for access/parking	2%
Don't know/not answered	1%
Total – don't always swim between flags at patrolled beaches	139

Over half (54%) the swimmers said they don't always swim in the flagged area as it is too crowded.

- > *Because too many boogie boarders are between the flags to the point where it becomes unsafe as you are constantly getting hit by inexperienced users. In this case I would swim slightly outside of the flagged area to avoid the hazard, knowing that life guards leave a margin on each side of the flags that is safe to swim.*
- > *Too crowded at popular beaches (eg Long Bay), the water is very calm and it is not a dangerous beach. At an unfamiliar or surf beach I would be much more likely to swim between the flags.*
- > *There are a lot of crabs in the region between the flags, it tends to be overcrowded, and the beach I go to is relatively safe.*
- > *When the beach is too crowded, I personally think that alone can make it difficult to identify if someone is in need of help*
- > *Too busy, too many people on bodyboards with poor control.*
- > *The Flagged area too small and too crowded actually making it more dangerous to swim there. Sometimes right beside hole or rip but located there because it is in front of the surf club building. Not always the best place to enjoy the beach safely.*
- > *Only when it's too crowded and I would be a potential hazard to other swimmers.*

Three out of ten (29%) who don't use the patrolled area are confident swimmers.

- > *I am a life guard and feel confident doing so also sometimes it's too crowded.*
- > *I'm a very proficient swimmer, surfer, paddleboarder. Waves aren't as good between the flags and there are too many people. I need my own space.*
- > *Sometimes it's too crowded and I am a very strong swimmer.*
- > *Because they are too crowded and I am able to swim at least 2 km and feel with my parents there I am safe to stay afloat while they contact the lifeguards.*
- > *I like the movement in a rip.*
- > ***I like swimming for the freedom and respect for the vastness and beauty of the ocean. I try to keep marine life as undisturbed as possible therefore I have had many wildlife encounters. It is not peaceful to listen to everyone else and crash into other people etc it ruins the experience. I take all precautions I can and behave safely. Anything I do is my own responsibility and at my own risk. It's the only way it's worth it for me. Here I'll be corny and say I like to live life in the wild and rugged. Life isn't meant to be lived between the flags.***

A fifth mentioned that sometimes there were no flags, or the life guards had gone.

- > *In the evenings out of hours. Always have someone on the beach watching me, and check for tell-tale signs of rip's first.*
- > *Sometimes there are no lifeguards on duty and no flags.*

Some said they don't go in deep, and stay close beside the patrolled area.

- > *Sometimes too busy and crowded so I swim nearby where there is not a rip.*
- > *They're really close together with a lot of people in them so I'll swim as close as possible to them.*
- > *Sometimes the waves are better for body boarding and surfing elsewhere. Sometimes way too busy between the flags.*

Others find themselves sometimes drifting from the flags.

- > *Not on purpose, but sometimes I will be unaware that I've moved outside them.*
- > *Might stray out of the zone from time to time wave action etc.*

A few said the patrolled areas are not convenient.

- > *The areas patrolled are away from easy to access beach areas e.g. Waimarama in Hawkes Bay.*

- > *Unnecessary sometimes. I used to be a lifeguard, and sometimes the flags are just inconvenient.*
- > *I've walked along the beach and can't be bothered walking back to the flags.*

What are the reasons you don't wade/paddle between the flags?

Walking along beach/shallow water <i>I feel safe/don't need supervision/have dog</i>	52%
Too busy/crowded <i>Hazardous boogie boards/others have more need</i>	27%
Life guards gone/no flags/unpatrolled	17%
Not convenient/too far away/not where I want to be	10%
Drift outside flags	2%
Don't know	5%
Total - don't always wade between flags at patrolled beaches	124

Half of those who had waded or paddled at a patrolled beach outside the flagged areas said they were walking along the beach or staying in shallow areas and felt safe.

- > *Paddling isn't dangerous.*
- > *Because when I wade through the water I do not go deeper than my knees and tend to walk up and down the whole beach.*
- > *Because wading or paddling doesn't put me at huge risk.*
- > *As before, I'm an extremely proficient swimmer, surfer, and paddleboarder. I don't like being in a cramped area with heaps of people.*
- > *There are areas when walking along beaches where it is not possible to walk above the water line and some paddling is necessary but I never wade in water above ankle deep unless on patrolled beach.*
- > *Paddling to me is just walking in a couple of cms on water, not actually swimming (submerged) in the water.*
- > *Never go above my knees, I know my limits, how to read the conditions and am a strong swimmer.*
- > *Because I am just walking through the water up to my knees at maximum, if I fall or slip I have enough skills to stand up and get out.*

A quarter mentioned the flagged area was often too crowded.

- > *Too crowded, want to leave that space for children*
- > *Too crowded and I'm not going in above my knees so I prefer to be closer to where we're gathered on shore.*
- > *I usually do, but if it's busy I don't see any problem in doing so outside the flags as I think it's safe so long as I'm not deep.*
- > *I don't want to take up space that a swimmer can use - who need to be there more.*

Some said the flagged areas were inconvenient or not where they wanted to be.

- > *I am often supervising older kids on surfboards and thus they can't be between the flags.*
- > *Flags at other end of beach.*
- > *Because I know my limits and I'm usually with dogs on leads in the water.*

Swimming at unpatrolled beaches

39% of those who had been swimming in the past 12 months swam at an unpatrolled beach:

- Two-fifths (41%) said they always follow the advice of safety notices, and a similar number always check the water for strong currents and rips (38%), and never get in without safety checks (37%)
- Over two-fifths (43%) sometimes (or more often) swim alone
- Four-fifths (80%) don't always check the weather report
- A fifth (21%) at least sometimes enter the water under the influence of alcohol

At an unpatrolled beach (no life guard), how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Read and follow the advice of any safety notices	2%	18%	39%	41%
Check the water for strong currents and rips	11%	21%	31%	38%
Check the weather report before you go to the beach	10%	32%	38%	20%
Get in without any safety checks	37%	36%	22%	5%
Ask someone for advice on where it's safe to swim	32%	47%	17%	4%
Swim alone, i.e. with no-one else around	57%	37%	5%	1%
Enter the water while under the influence of alcohol	79%	18%	3%	0%

True n=241

Swimming at rivers

21% of those who had been swimming in the past 12 months swam in a river or stream:

- While half (50%) always read safety notices, three-fifths don't always check the water for hidden obstacles (61%), don't always check the water or strong currents and depth (63%) and at least sometimes get in without any safety checks (61%)
- Almost a quarter (23%) sometimes (or more often) swim in rivers under the influence of alcohol, and two-fifths (41%) sometimes (or more often) swim alone

When swimming in a river, how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Read and follow the advice of any safety notices	2%	18%	30%	50%
Check the water for hidden obstacles	5%	18%	38%	39%
Check the water for strong currents and the depth	7%	19%	37%	37%
Check the weather report before you go to the river	8%	34%	42%	16%
Ask someone for advice on where it's safe to swim	14%	48%	30%	8%
Get in without any safety checks	39%	44%	14%	3%
Enter the water while under the influence of alcohol	77%	18%	3%	2%
Swim alone, with no-one else around	59%	37%	2%	2%

True n=139

6.2 Supervising preschool children

33% had looked after a preschool child in the last 12 months:

- Almost half supervised a bath (45%), and two-fifths (41%) a public swimming pool visit, while 30% were at an unpatrolled beach and 28% at private swimming pools
- When looking after a preschool child near water - just over two-thirds (69%) said they always stay within arm's reach of the child, while 87% said they never leave the child unsupervised
- Only two-thirds (67%) reported they never get distracted (by a phone etc.)

Where have you looked after a preschool child in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

In the bath/bathing	45%
Public swimming pool	41%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	30%
Private swimming pool	28%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	23%
River or stream	16%
Lake or pond	13%
Harbour/Estuary	6%
Off-shore or at sea	2%
None of the above	17%
True n=	332

When looking after a preschool child near water (bath, swimming pool, beach, lake, stream or river), how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Stay within arm's reach of the child?	1%	5%	25%	69%
Leave them unsupervised (even briefly)?	87%	11%	1%	1%
Get distracted e.g. by a phone, reading, other people etc.?	67%	31%	1%	1%
True n=332				

6.3 Fishing (or food gathering)

24% had been fishing (or food gathering) in the last 12 months:

- Almost half were at an unpatrolled beach or coastline (47%), while a third were off shore or at sea (35%), and a quarter at a harbour or estuary (25%)
- Just over half (55%) always check the weather forecast and conditions
- More than a quarter (28%) are at least sometimes by themselves
- Just over half (56%) always wear a life jacket when fishing from a boat, but only a fifth (21%) do when in the water, and a tenth when standing on rocks by water (10%)

Where have you been fishing (or food gathering) in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	47%
Off-shore or at sea	35%
Harbour/Estuary	25%
River or stream	19%
Lake or pond	13%
Patrolled beach or coastline (with life guards)	5%
True n=	244

When you go out fishing (or food gathering), how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Check the weather report and conditions?	2%	14%	29%	55%
Go out just by yourself?	72%	19%	8%	1%
True n=244				

When you go out fishing (or food gathering) do you wear a life jacket when you are...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
In a boat	11%	10%	22%	56%
In the water	38%	26%	15%	21%
Standing on rocks by the water	52%	24%	14%	10%
True n=244				

6.4 Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or stand up paddleboarding

16% had been canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or stand up paddleboarding in the last 12 months:

- A third were at unpatrolled beaches or coastline (34%), and a third on a lake or pond (31%). Over half always wear a life jacket (57%), and never go by themselves (52%)

Where have you been canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or stand up paddleboarding in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	34%
Lake or pond	31%
River	22%
Harbour/Estuary	21%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	20%
Off-shore or at sea	13%
True n=	176

When canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or stand up paddleboarding, how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Wear a life jacket	6%	12%	24%	57%
Check the weather report and conditions	10%	21%	32%	36%
Go out just by yourself	52%	29%	14%	4%
True n=176				

6.5 Surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing

10% had been surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing in the last 12 months:

- Around three-fifths were at patrolled beaches (63%), or unpatrolled beaches (61%). Less than a third always check the weather report and conditions (30%)

Where have you been surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	63%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	61%
River	6%
Lake or pond	5%
Harbour/Estuary	4%
Off-shore or at sea	2%
True n=	105

When surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing, how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Check the weather report and conditions	14%	25%	32%	30%
Wear a life jacket	77%	12%	7%	4%
Go out just by yourself	56%	31%	12%	1%
True n=105				

6.6 Power boating, or jet skiing

10% had been power boating, or jet skiing, in the last 12 months:

- Two-fifths of power boaters were off-shore (43%), a third were in a harbour or estuary (35%), while another third were on a lake or pond (32%). Three-fifths said they always wear a life jacket (60%)
- Two-fifths of jet skiers were on a lake or pond (43%), and over three-quarters said they always wear a life jacket (78%)

Where have you been power boating, or jet skiing in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

	Power Boating	Jet skiing
Off-shore or at sea	43%	18%
Harbour/Estuary	35%	23%
Lake or pond	32%	43%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	25%	27%
River	22%	24%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	5%	22%
True n=	98	31

Power boating

When you go out power boating, how often...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Are there enough life jackets for everyone?	0%	15%	13%	72%
Do you have the required safety equipment on board?	5%	6%	18%	71%
Do you wear a life jacket?	5%	14%	20%	60%
Are all people on board wearing life jackets?	5%	18%	28%	49%
Are you in charge of the craft?	41%	40%	11%	9%
Are you (or others) under the influence of alcohol?	58%	25%	12%	5%
Are there too many people on the boat?	73%	14%	13%	0%
True n=98				

When you are in charge (of power boat), how often do you check...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
The weather or marine forecasts before you go out in the boat	0%	24%	20%	56%
A water or boating safety code, website or app	21%	16%	41%	22%
True n=58				

Jet skiing

When you go out jet skiing, how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Wear a life jacket	0%	13%	9%	78%
Check the weather report and conditions	8%	11%	58%	23%
Go out just by yourself	45%	22%	29%	4%
True n=31				

6.7 Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.)

9% had done underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.) in the last 12 months:

- Half had done these underwater activities at an unpatrolled beach or coastline (53%)
- Less than half said they always check the weather forecast and conditions (46%)
- A fifth sometimes or usually go out by themselves (22%)
- Two-fifths sometimes or usually separate from their buddy (42%)

Where have you done underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.) in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	53%
Off-shore or at sea	29%
Lake or pond	13%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	11%
River	9%
Harbour/Estuary	8%
True n=	98

When participating in underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.), how often do you...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Check the weather report and conditions	6%	10%	37%	46%
Go out just by yourself	78%	13%	9%	0%
Separate from your buddy	58%	33%	9%	0%
True n=98				

6.8 Sailing

5% had been sailing in the last 12 months – so please note the smaller group responding to these questions

Sailing in **small boats** (6m or less):

- Half had been sailing on a lake (50%), and almost two-fifths at unpatrolled beaches or coastline (39%), off shore (38%), or harbour/estuary areas (37%)
- Half said all people on board always wear life jackets (50%), while over a third (37%) said there are not always enough life jackets for everyone
- Only a third said they always have the required safety equipment on board (33%), and over two-fifths (43%) go out by themselves at times
- A third are at times under the influence of alcohol (34%)
- When in charge of a small boat, less than half always check the weather or marine forecasts before they go out (48%)

Sailing in **large boats**:

- Almost two-thirds were off shore or at sea (64%) and half in harbours/estuaries (53%)
- A quarter said all people on board always wear life jackets (24%), while over a quarter (28%) reported there are not always enough life jackets for everyone
- Seven out of ten (71%) said they always have the required safety equipment on board, and there are never too many people on board (73%)
- Two-fifths (42%) said at times they (or others) are under the influence of alcohol
- When in charge of a large boat, just over half always check the weather or marine forecasts before they go out (56%)

Where have you been sailing in New Zealand in the last 12 months, and in what type of boat?

	Small Boat (6m or less)	Large Boat (more than 6m)
Lake or pond	50%	8%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	39%	29%
Off-shore or at sea	38%	64%
Harbour/Estuary	37%	53%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	23%	9%
River	14%	7%
True n=	29	30

Small boats

When sailing in a small boat (6m or less), how often...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Are there enough life jackets for everyone	6%	12%	19%	63%
Do you wear a life jacket	13%	7%	20%	61%
Are all people on board wearing life jackets	7%	12%	31%	50%
Do you have the required safety equipment on board	11%	13%	43%	33%
Are you in charge of the craft	21%	41%	18%	19%
Are there too many people on the boat	62%	16%	16%	7%
Do you go out just by yourself	57%	19%	21%	3%
Are you (or others) under the influence of alcohol	66%	11%	19%	3%

True n=29

When you are in charge (of small boat), how often do you check...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
The weather or marine forecasts before you go out in the boat	4%	13%	35%	48%
A water or boating safety code, website or app	16%	47%	34%	4%

True n=23

Large boats

When sailing in a large boat (more than 6m), how often...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Are there enough life jackets for everyone	0%	15%	13%	72%
Do you have the required safety equipment on board	5%	6%	18%	71%
Do you wear a life jacket	21%	29%	24%	26%
Are all people on board wearing life jackets	19%	24%	33%	24%
Are you (or others) under the influence of alcohol	58%	25%	12%	5%
Are you in charge of the craft	45%	41%	11%	3%
Are there too many people on the boat	73%	14%	13%	0%
Are there enough life jackets for everyone	0%	15%	13%	72%

True n=30

When you are in charge (of large boat), how often do you check...

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
The weather or marine forecasts before you go out in the boat	0%	24%	20%	56%
A water or boating safety code, website or app	21%	16%	41%	22%

True n=16

6.9 Accidental falls in water

4% said they had accidentally fallen in water in the last 12 months.

- Almost a third (31%) fell in a river or stream, over a quarter (28%) in a public swimming pool, while one fifth (20%) fell in a lake or pond, and another fifth in a private swimming pool (19%).

Where did you accidentally fall in the water in New Zealand in the last 12 months?

River or stream	31%
Public swimming pool	28%
Lake or pond	20%
Private swimming pool	19%
Off-shore or at sea	13%
Unpatrolled beach or coastline (no life guards)	12%
Harbour/Estuary	9%
In the bath/bathing	6%
Patrolled Beach or coastline (with life guards)	4%
Somewhere else (child's paddling pool, school pool)	4%
True n=	46

7. Risk takers

This section presents the results of an analysis that looked at risk taking behaviours reported by respondents. For analysis purposes individuals had broad risk profiles assigned:

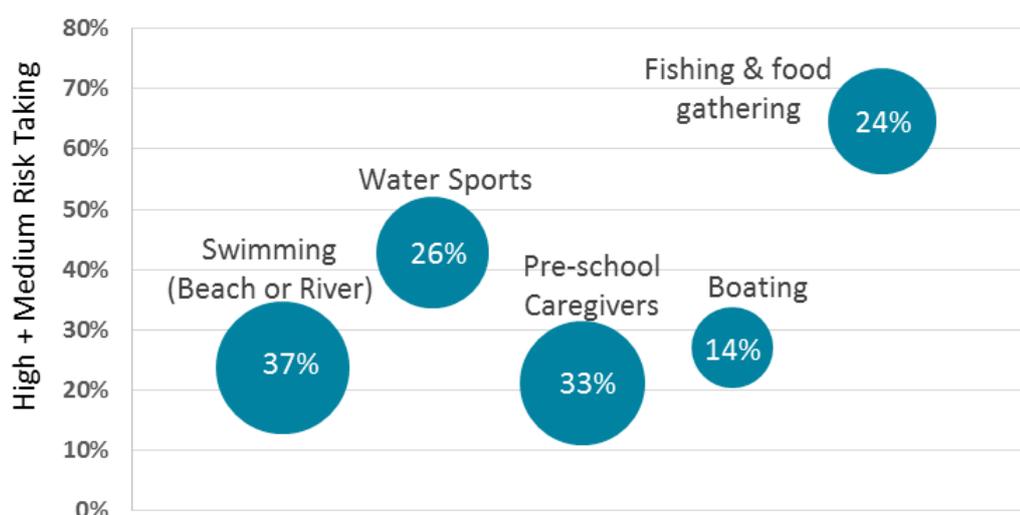
1. No Risk
2. Low Risk
3. Medium Risk
4. High Risk

In order to maximise available responses, these profiles were assigned at broad activity levels of:

1. Swimming
2. Boating (Sailing, power boating)
3. Water sports (canoeing, surfing, jet skiing, underwater activities etc.)
4. Fishing or food gathering
5. Child care

For each individual, the number of reported risk taking behaviours was assessed against the number of activities undertaken to provide a risk score (%) which was in turn classified into the risk profiles.

- The activity with the highest proportion of medium to high risk takers was fishing and food gathering – 65% reported unsafe behaviours such as not always going with someone, or checking the weather report and conditions.



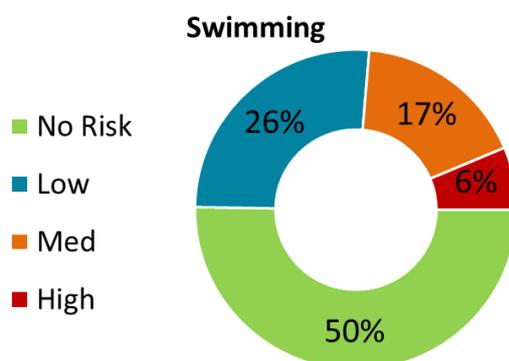
Circle size is proportional to the % the NZ public who undertake the activity

Risk profile	No risk	Low	Med	High	High + Med risk	Proportion of population
Fishing & food gathering	11%	24%	59%	6%	65%	24%
Water Sports	51%	6%	25%	18%	43%	26%
Boating	33%	40%	16%	11%	27%	14%
Swimming (Beach or River)	50%	26%	17%	6%	24%	37%
Pre-school Caregivers	51%	28%	15%	7%	21%	33%

Note: In the discussion below specific groups are described as over or under-represented when they appear in a category out of proportion to their actual numbers. For example, if 50% of our respondents are male, and 75% of those classified as high risk takers are male then we would say that males are over-represented by half (50%).

7.1 Swimming risk takers

Risk taking behaviours were monitored for swimming at unpatrolled beaches, patrolled beaches and in rivers and streams. A total of 388 respondents (39%) reported undertaking at least one of these swimming activities.



- Half the swimmers have been categorised as no risk – safe swimmers.
- The other half includes a quarter who were low risk (26%), and a quarter (24%) who were classed as medium to high risk takers.

Who are our risk takers?

When we look at everyone who reported taking some degree of risk when swimming (low, medium or high risk), we see:

- No apparent gender difference
- Young people (15-24) over-represented amongst risk takers by more than a third (37%)
- People aged under 45 years over-represented amongst risk takers by a fifth (20%)
- Pacific peoples are also over-represented amongst risk takers (36% - but note that this is based on low numbers)

Risk takers appear to be aged under 45, but particularly those in the 15 to 24 years age bracket.

Who are the High Risk takers?

When we look at those people who have been classed as high risk takers, the data is a little more revealing. Those over represented are:

- Males - significantly over-represented by nearly half (48%)
- Aged under 45 - over-represented by nearly a third (28%)
 - those aged 25 -35 present at twice the rate one would expect
- Young males (15-24) are over-represented by nearly two fifths (39%) when compared to females in the same age group
- Asian people by 39% but note that numbers are low
- Pre-school caregivers are strongly over represented (59%)

Those under-represented are:

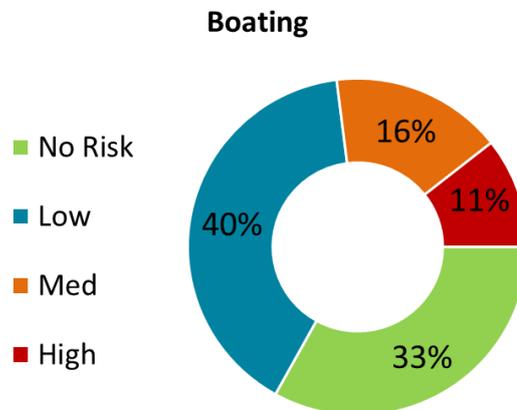
- People 45 and over are under represented by over half (57%)
- Those outside of the urban areas
- Northland & East North Island is under-represented by (59%)

So our high risk takers are predominantly male, under 45. Risk-taking behaviour appears to peak in the 25-35 years bracket.

This may go some way to explaining the apparent risk taking amongst pre-school caregivers as many of these males may have young families. In fact when reviewing pre-school caregivers risk taking behaviours by gender we observe that none of the females are classed as high risk. In stark contrast, male pre-school caregivers show up as high risk takers at 3 times the rate they should.

7.2 Boating

Risk taking behaviours were monitored for sailing in both large (more than 6 m) and smaller craft, and for power boating. They were rolled together to form this boating section. A total of 137 respondents (14%) reported undertaking at least one of these boating activities.



Boaties appear to be inclined to a degree of risky behaviour. However much of that relates to a few risk behaviours rather than the clusters of risk behaviours indicated by the medium to high risk takers.

- One third of the boaties have been categorised as no risk.
- The other two thirds includes 40% who were low risk, and about a quarter (27%) who were classed as medium to high risk takers.

Who are our risk takers?

When we look at everyone who reported taking some degree of risk when boating (low, medium or high risk), we see:

- Men are slightly over-represented
- No significant age differences

Risk takers appear fairly representative of the boating community.

Who are the High Risk takers?

Again when we look at those people who have been classed as high risk takers, the data is a little more revealing. Those over represented are:

- While women are under-represented amongst the risk-takers overall, they are significantly over-represented amongst the high risk takers (by 29%)
- Aucklanders are over-represented by a factor of 2
- Aged under 35 - over-represented by more than one third (40%)
 - those aged 15 -24 present at half again the rate one would expect

Those under-represented are:

- Those outside of the urban areas (by 55%)

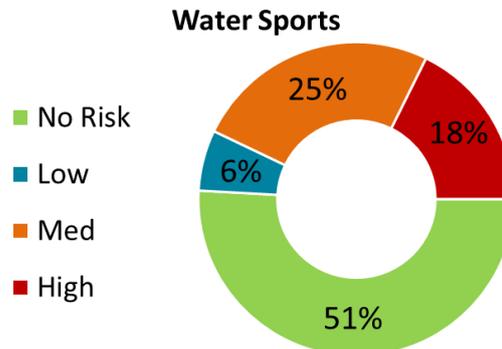
So our high risk takers tend to be younger, under 35 (52% of high risk takers c.f. 37% of boaties), from Auckland (57% of high risk takers c.f. 30% of boaties).

7.3 Water sports

Risk taking behaviours were monitored for:

- Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or stand up paddleboarding,
- Surfing, boogie boarding, or wind surfing
- Underwater activities (snorkelling, scuba diving etc.) and
- Jet skiing

A total of 275 respondents (28%) reported undertaking at least one of these water sport activities.



- One half of water sport participants have been categorised as no risk
- Only 6% were low risk, and about two-fifths (43%) who were classed as medium to high risk takers

Who are our risk takers?

When we look at everyone who reported some degree of risk taking when participating in water sports (low, medium or high risk), we see:

- Men are slightly over-represented
- Under 45 year olds are slightly over-represented
- Pacific peoples are also over-represented amongst risk takers by nearly a factor of 2 (86%) - but note that this is based on low numbers

Risk takers appear slightly dominated by young men, but in general they are fairly representative of the water sports community.

Who are the High Risk takers?

Those over represented are:

- Men are slightly over-represented
- City dwellers are over-represented amongst the high risk takers (by 32%)
- Aucklanders are over-represented by 44%.
- Aged under 45 - over-represented by nearly 1 third (29%)

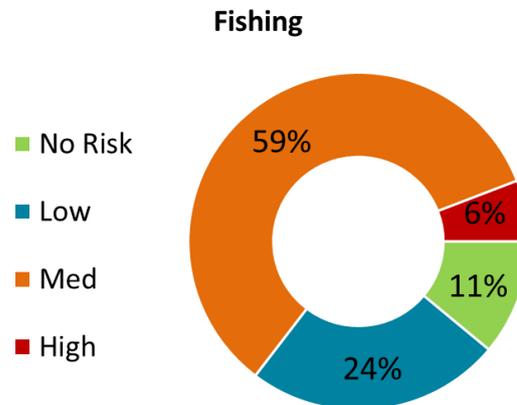
Those under-represented are:

- 45 years and over (by 82%)
- Women are slightly under-represented

So our high risk takers tend to be, under 45 (95% of high risk takers c.f. 74% of participants), and from cities (84% of high risk takers c.f. 63% of participants).

7.4 Fishing and food gathering

A total of 244 respondents (24%) reported undertaking fishing or food gathering activities in the past 12 months.



- One in 10 fishing and food gathering participants have been categorised as no risk.
- Most participants (89%) report at least some risk behaviour
- Only 6% were high risk takers, but nearly three fifths (59%) who were classed as medium risk takers with about a quarter (24%) classified as low risk takers.

Who are our risk takers?

When we look at everyone who reported some degree of risk taking when fishing or food gathering (low, medium or high risk), we see...

Risk takers are very representative of the fishing and food gathering community.

This is not surprising given the high proportion who report taking at least some risks.

Who are the High Risk takers?

It worth noting that only 6% report as high risk takers

Those over represented are:

- While women are not over-represented amongst the risk-takers overall, they are over-represented amongst the high risk takers by nearly a fifth (by 18%)
- The high risk taking seems to peak in the 35-44 years age group where they are over represented by a factor of nearly 3
- Aucklanders are over-represented by 56%

So our high risk takers are overly inclusive of those aged 35 to 44 (39% of high risk takers c.f. 14% of participants) and Aucklanders (50% of high risk takers c.f. 32% of participants).

However in general terms as stated above:

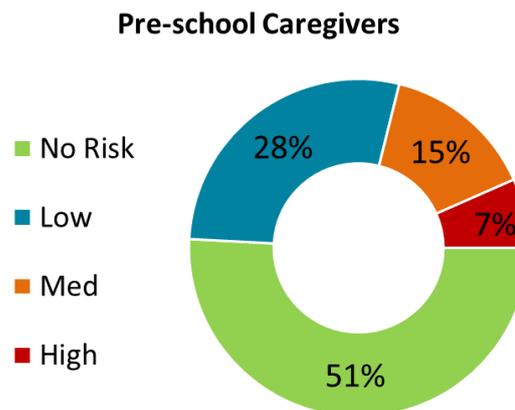
Risk takers are very representative of the fishing and food gathering community.

7.5 Looking after a preschool child near water

This risk threshold for classifying care of a pre-schooler is set more strictly than for other activities. To be classified as “no risk” the respondent must:

- Stay within arm's reach of the child? - Always
- Leave them unsupervised (even briefly)? - Never
- Get distracted? - Never

A total of 332 respondents (33%) reported looking after a pre-school child near water in the past 12 months.



- Half (51%) of those caring for pre-schoolers near water have been categorised as no risk.
- Half (49%) report at least some risk behaviour
- Only 7% were high risk takers, a further 15% are medium risk takers effectively placing nearly a quarter (22%) in the medium to high risk category

Who are our risk takers?

When we look at everyone who reported some degree of risk taking care of a pre-schooler near water (low, medium or high risk), we see:

- Males aged 15-24 over represented by nearly a quarter (24%)

So our risk takers tend to be younger. Particularly young men.

Who are the High Risk takers?

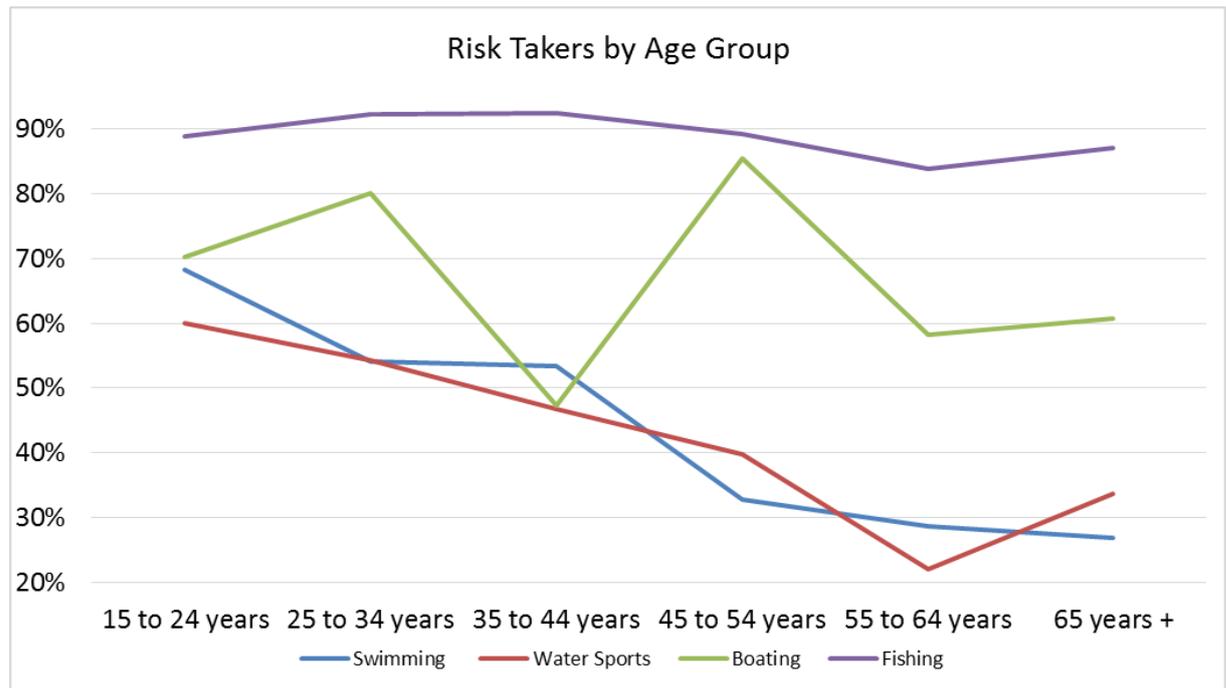
It worth noting that only 7% report as high risk takers. However high risk is clearly associated with youth.

Those over represented are:

- Under 45 year olds are over -represented amongst the high risk-takers by nearly a half (48%)
- Males 15-24 over represented by 170%. They are 35% of the carers but 87% of the high risk takers.

So our high risk takers are young, particularly male in the 15 to 24 age group

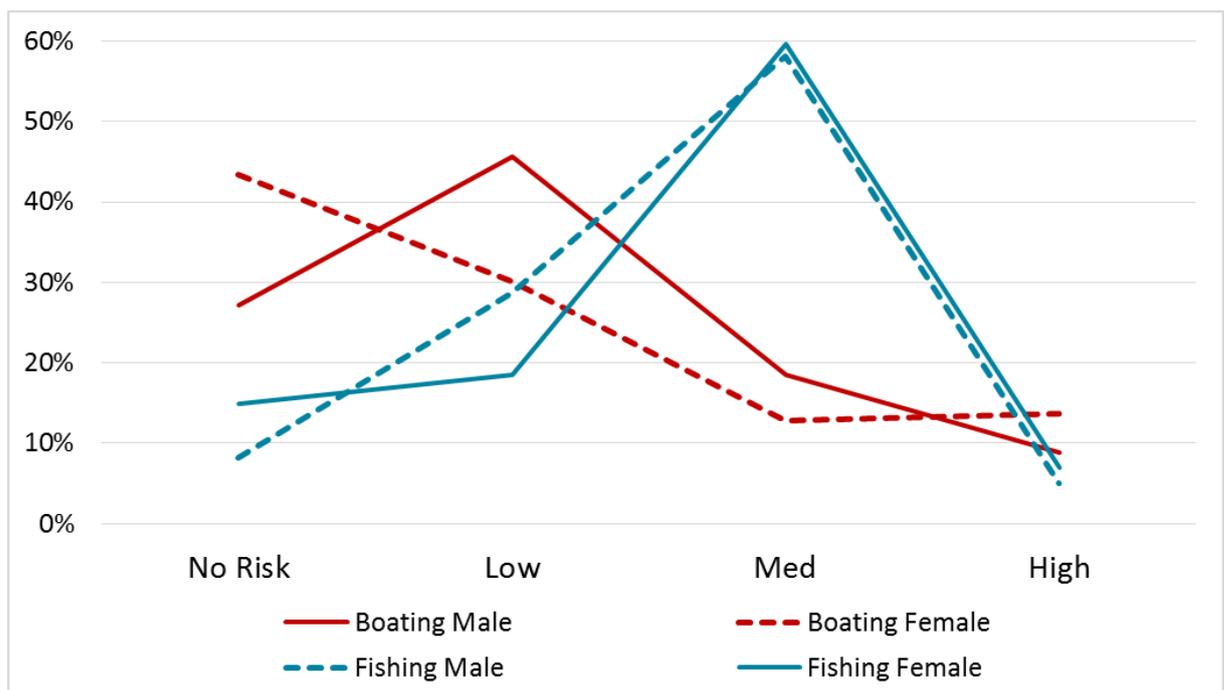
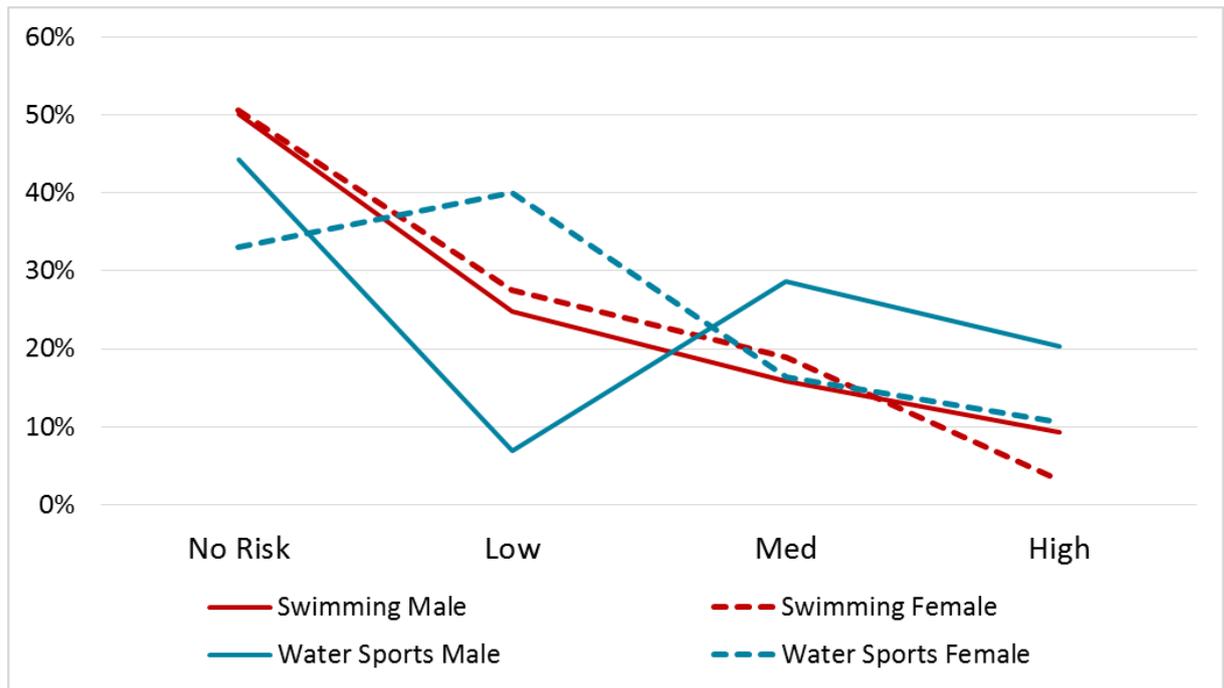
7.6 Risk taking and age



It seems reasonable to assume that risk taking behaviour is, as a general rule, a function of age and that as we age we become more cautious.

However as can be seen in the graph above, while this seems true of the more physical pursuits of swimming and water sports it does not necessarily apply to boating and fishing.

7.7 Risk taking and gender



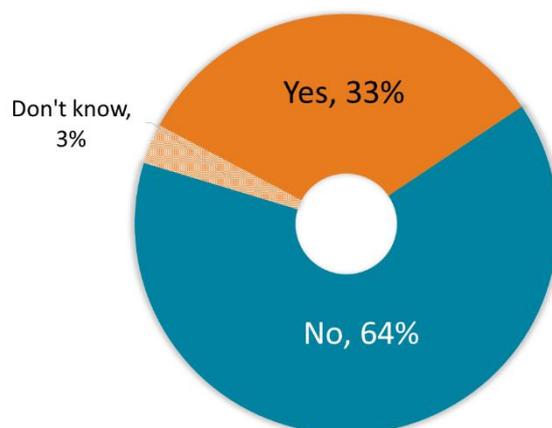
- Swimming:** Men present a slightly riskier profile than women.
- Water Sports:** Men present a much riskier profile than women.
- Boating:** Overall men present riskier profile than women.
- Fishing:** No real difference between the risk profiles of men and women.

8. Personal experiences

This section attempts to measure the proportion of the New Zealand public who have first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water, and the main factors they think that caused the problem.

Do you have first-hand experience of a serious situation in the water?

(Have you ever got into serious difficulty yourself, or seen someone else in trouble?)



n=1,000
February 2016

What do you think were the main factors that caused the problem?

Underestimating the conditions	42%
Lack of knowledge of the environment	30%
Lack of skills (e.g. not being able to swim)	29%
Over confidence	23%
Lack of common sense	19%
Accidentally fell in the water	18%
Bad luck	16%
Poor supervision	15%
They took a risk	15%
Just having fun	14%
Hidden obstacles	12%
Not following safety warnings or notices	10%
Showing off	10%
Not wearing a life jacket	8%
Peer group pressure	8%
Lack of safety equipment, or not being prepared	8%
Alcohol	7%
Poor health	3%
Storm or flood	3%
Drugs	2%
Other varied reasons	11%
True n=	333

Note: Respondents selected as many as applied from a list.

While overall a third (33%) said they have first-hand experience:

- Men (36%) were more likely than women (29%) to have experienced a serious situation.

Those who had first-hand experience were asked to describe who got into trouble. There were a large variety of situations and perspectives – some were themselves in trouble, others were the rescuers or bystanders. In most cases this was unexpected. It was up to the respondent to provide as much or as little information as they were comfortable providing. So the type of information included by each respondent varied, however there were some common themes that emerged and these are summarised below, followed by some examples of the comments.

Please describe who got into trouble in the water

Specific people mentioned...

Me - the respondent	50%
Children aged under 15 years	46%
Older teens (15-19 years)	13%
Young adults (20's)	11%

Specific activities mentioned...

Swimming/surfing/boogie boarding	48%
Boating	12%
Fell in/paddling/jumped in	10%
Water sports (kayaking, canoeing etc.)	6%

Locations mentioned...

Beach/seaside	42%
River	15%
Swimming pool	12%
Harbour/wharf	8%
Lake/pond	4%
Estuary/tidal area	4%
Home/stream/swim hole	2%

Causes mentioned...

Rip/strong currents/big wave - wiped out	34%
Unprepared/fell/capsized/underestimated conditions	23%
Lack of supervision	5%
Mechanical failure	2%
Trouble from trying to rescue others	1%

Based on unprompted comments, multiple themes coded separately n=333

From what we can tell, at least half:

- Specified they were personally involved in the incident
- Mentioned that children (under the age of 15) were involved
- Involved swimming, surfing, or boogie boarding

While fishing:

- > *My father drowned while flounder fishing with a net. He was wearing body waders and stepped into a hole. He was a very good swimmer but when his waders filled up he didn't have a show.*
- > *White baiter - a larger than normal swell entered the river mouth and dragged him and his net into deeper water (drop off) he was reluctant to let his net go so got dragged out of his depth. What saved him was he was wearing a wet suit which provided buoyancy and he managed to come ashore at the river mouth.*

Some school situations:

- > *At school swimming lessons form 1 pupil dove into the deep end and drowned. Teacher tried to help but was sucked down by a leak in the pool. They both died.*
- > *School friend in semi open water by a rock island with big swells, supervised by lifeguards but was a dangerous activity on a school camp. He was 17 at the time and not a very strong swimmer. Ended up having oxygen on the beach when they had dragged him out*
- > *A group of us (in 3rd form at college) were river crossing at a school camp. The weather gradually got worse to where it was pouring with heavy rain - we had one more river to cross and the current had become very fast. We were all told to grab a big stick or something and try to cross in groups of four to a stick. One person slipped which created a domino effect and several of us, including myself, were washed down the rapids. Some of us sustained injuries but luckily all survived the ordeal.*

Examples of swimming pool incidents:

- > *A school mate (17yrs old) who couldn't swim got into trouble at the public pool. Being an advanced swimmer who regularly won at swimming competitions, I went to rescue her. But in her anxiety she pulled me down and stepped on my shoulder so she could remain on the surface to breathe. I knew I was going to drown if I don't get any air soon. I held her up as I swam to the edge under water. I almost drowned. I was only 17 too. Makes me think twice about rescuing anyone in the water anymore.*
- > *I did, I was about 6 years old and I tripped and fell into the public pool (deep end), the person meant to be watching me was sunbathing and didn't see me fall in.*
- > *My six year old son in a supervised public pool. I was watching from outside. The life saver/supervisor noticed he was in difficulty just in time.*
- > *It was me. I was in a 24hr run. They had stuff for us to do between runs. I was at QEII and we had to jump into a kayak and paddle the length of the pool and the kayak flipped over and I could not turn it back or get out of it. Someone jumped in and flipped it over and then they had people in the pool for that reason.*

Beach memories:

- > *I nearly drowned at a beach, didn't realise tide had turned and there was a strong rip. Was early morning swim before lifeguards arrived*
- > *Myself and my girlfriend at Langs beach. My girlfriend was not as confident in the water as I was and got swept towards some rocks. I went to help her but she was pushing me under. Eventually we only just made it into shore before getting washed up on the rocks*
- > *Two people I was with and I got caught in a rip swimming at a patrolled surf beach known for its big waves and strong current. I swam back to shore but the two people I was with were not so strong swimmers and were rescued by the life boat.*
- > *I got into trouble at the beach when I was 13. I was hit by a large wave, pushed under the water, dragged backwards and swallowed water, luckily I bounced back to the surface and was able to catch the next wave to the shore*
- > *At the beach, I was about 16. Swimming and playing in knee deep water when a surfer lost his board which then came in on a wave and hit me on the head, knocking me unconscious.*
- > *Myself - at Raglan in January 1960 at age 16- went out beyond the first break and got caught in the rip - Luckily for me I was the Waikato Breaststroke Champion at the time, but it still took me more than two hours to make my way back to shore where my mother tore a strip off me!!*
- > *I was at the beach in my early 20s and was on a body board and started to get pulled out by a rip and didn't have any experience in what to do. Luckily the person that I with did and came and got me and helped me to shore. I don't swim at the beach any more.*
- > *Beach, teenage friend washed out who I had to rescue using a boogie board, scary.*
- > *I was caught in a rip while surfing on Auckland's west coast and washed towards a rocky coastline. I was fortunately rescued by Surf Lifesavers.*

Involving young children:

- > *I was four, my uncle had me on his shoulders and was jumping waves, then dropped me and couldn't find me. At local beach.*
- > *Toddler fell into the water at the beach 18mths old. Mother was too busy looking at her iPhone and not supervising her child. I saw it happen and rescued the toddler.*
- > *One neighbour's 2 year old in another neighbour's fish pond.*

Harbours and tidal areas:

- > *Teenagers involved in dragon boat training out in the harbour (Auckland harbour). No one had lifejackets and most of them were inexperienced. Dragon boat capsized.*
- > *Me. Around 26 years old. Swam across a channel with a friend to get ice cream (from Whakapirau to Pah). The current was too strong for my swimming ability/level of fitness so had to cling for boats moored in the channel. My friend was ok. We managed to get there but it was not a smart thing to do and we hitched a ride back across on someone's boat.*
- > *2 x 8 year old girls who jumped off a pontoon in a safe swimming area. One girl got her foot caught on a mussel boy chain that was running off the pontoon. It was in a tidal area and as the outgoing tide strengthened it was hard to untangle her. By the time she was untangled the current was too strong. The girls were dragged down the estuary and almost out to sea. They were able to grab a mooring rope and pull themselves out of immediate danger.*
- > *It was at Goat Island they thought they would be fine swimming over to the island but didn't take notice of the tide and over confident in their abilities and could of drowned on the way back from exhaustion*
- > *Me, age 69, free diving off shore on reef, dived too deep and not enough air to surface again.*

Some river experiences:

- > *20, Clutha River, in a kayak. We decided to go down some higher grade rapids and got over turned. We got bumped up a bit, but eventually got out of them.*
- > *Me, age 34, at river fishing over estimated flow and depth of water, obstacles in river*
- > *Myself at 14 years canoeing Whanganui River and canoe overturned in rapids and life jacket snagged on underwater branch with pressure of water holding me under - rescued by older supervisor*
- > *White water rafting on Wairoa River (Grade 5), all adults, guide said over right (which means those on left go to right side of raft), but all those on right came over to left and partially capsized raft (got stuck on rock we were trying to dodge), some of us towards the back went into water, had to hold on to one woman going under at back of raft while hanging on myself until guide came to help - none on the right had understood his instructions properly yet said they did.*

Lakes:

- > *My nana, getting into the boat at the boat ramp (lake Taupo), fell off the back of the boat. She is 75.*
- > *Myself (aged 10), as a passenger in a small speed boat which capsized on the lake in rough water. I was trapped under the boat but could not get out because my life jacket was holding me up! Fortunately the skipper found me and was able to drag me up. In this case, I would probably have been able to rescue myself if I did NOT have a jacket on (as I am a good under-water swimmer).*
- > *Age 50 tipped out of a kayak on a lake and could not get back in*
- > *Middle age man fell off his racing yacht and drowned in the lake (very windy conditions - racing was cancelled) and his crew lacked the knowledge to get the boat around to pick him up. He was not dressed for going overboard.*

Boats:

- > *Age 21, out on the boat, close to a beach. Fell off a water toy and was winded landed head down in the water, had to be pulled in by a friend and was unconscious and then helicoptered to hospital.*

- > *The sea was really rough and the boat pounding as it landed after the waves. I lost my footing, smashed my head on the stainless handrail, and landed heavily on my knee onto the valve of a dive bottle, and then got tossed overboard.*
- > *Me aged 25 boat flipped on a rough bar and I was thrown out. The boat driver had been drinking.*
- > *There was 2 of us... We were in our 30's...in Wellington Harbour... In a speed Boat... The motor stopped and we could not start it. We were drifting out by Somes Island fortunately after about 1/2 an hour we managed to get it started again and got back to Evans Bay We were really worried as the seas had got quite rough. We never checked the weather forecast.*
- > *My motor cut out by a breakwater and waves pushed it into rocks 2 on board jumped on rocks called 111 hey no signal 3kms from the station got to phone called coast guard and they went straight past then out to sea picked up 10 mins later.*
- > *Dad-- three children on boat fishing trip weather storm return trip motor problems knowing the harbour well able to get close enough to shore to shelter secure the boat and swim us in safely.*
- > *Young couple in borrowed dinghy that was too small for the afternoon waves that often come up in the Marlborough Sounds and they capsized trying to turn for home.*

Sometimes people panic:

- > *My little brother was panicking and grabbed onto my head and forced my head under the water, trying to use me as leverage to get out of the water. My little brother didn't know how to swim and my dad and my siblings weren't paying attention along with the fact that my little brother was blinded by panic that there was a ledge right next to him that he could of used instead of my head.*
- > *I have been involved in a number of rescues of student scuba divers. Most of the time it was from panic/fear, and then lack of knowledge/experience added to the issue. Various ages from teenagers to middle aged. Worst case was a middle aged woman who simply didn't have the confidence, had to rescue her 3 weekends in a row.*

Examples of the diversity:

- > *Naval operational situation.*
- > *4 year old, 16 year old, 11 year old, beach, after Boxing Day tsunami, beach closed lagoon open waves got bigger tore through lagoon, was fine after.*
- > *A seaman fell overboard age 45 off coast of Oman.*
- > *There have been several, e.g., beach, hit on the head by the bow of a boat, swimming pool. Stayed under too long and swallowed water, on country property, slipped into water filled drain, bath - slipped and bumped head. Shower - fainted etc. Life is dangerous, we can't protect against everything, just educated and take care.*
- > *1. Boy about 9, started drowning while trying to swim a race at the Invercargill swimming pool. 2. Boy about 12 swept away in rip at Grosse Point estuary, Mapua, Nelson. 3. 18 yr old girl, boy & girl 17 year olds, & 20 year old man caught in sudden storm in the lagoon off Poutasi village in Western Samoa when their boat sank were rescued or managed to struggle to shore. 4. Several young people aged 12-18 were swept away by a vicious tide change and onto razor sharp mussels on a bridge at Riverton Rocks during an open water swim. 5. A 20 yr old was wading in the sea at Oreti beach Invercargill when a large wave dumped him onto the sand, winding and wounding him. 6. Four young people about 21-28 had a car accident and crashed into the full estuary coming into Motueka, Tasman region. 7. 38 year old surfer smashed into the sea at St. Clair beach Dunedin by a loose board. 8. 10 month old toddler waddled down into the Lido swimming pool Palmerston North in the 3 seconds his family looked away, and the life guard was occupied at the other end of the pool and didn't see either. 9. 15 year old helping family bring in set nets at Himitungi beach when he was swept away in a rip, rescued many km away. 10. 9 yr old in crowded private pool was knocked out by another child doing a bomb jump.*