State of New Hampshire

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PRESS RELEASE

BE SAFE WHEN ENJOYING NEW HAMPSHIRE WATERS

CONCORD, N.H. – With municipal pools and public beaches limiting capacity to facilitate social distancing during the COVID-19 public health emergency, many people are seeking relief from the summer heat in more remote swimming locations, which are not monitored by lifeguards. The New Hampshire Department of Safety Division of State Police Marine Patrol Unit, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and local safety officials are urging residents and visitors to exercise extreme caution while swimming in, or recreating around, any of the Granite State's many waterbodies.

"Drownings are preventable tragedies. Know the risk and take appropriate safety measures when enjoying New Hampshire waterways," said NH Department of Safety Commissioner Robert Quinn. "No family deserves to go through the sorrow of losing a loved one, especially when it could have been prevented by taking standard water safety precautions."

"Due to the ongoing health pandemic, we've seen a great increase in the number of people going outside to recreate, and that's great," said NH Fish and Game Law Enforcement Chief, Colonel Kevin Jordan. "Our concern is that everyone goes home at night to their families. It is very important when you decide to go swimming that you know exactly where you are in case you need to call for help. Knowing exactly where you are helps rescuers get to you faster."

"Summer weather draws people to New Hampshire for our beautiful lakes, rivers and the ocean," said NH State Police Colonel Nathan Noyes. "Swim in areas with lifeguards whenever possible. Always swim with a friend, wear life jackets, know your own swimming ability, and know your surroundings. Never mix alcohol and drugs with water and boating activities."

"This season with more intense rip currents, the New Hampshire State Park's lifeguards have had some busy days," said NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Commissioner Sarah Stewart. "It's important to understand that parents are the first line of defense for children. Never leave children unattended in the water—not even for a minute. If your child is in the water, you should be too. Accidents can happen very quickly."

"Water safety is a consideration for everybody; your life depends on it," said Concord NH Fire Department Battalion Chief Derek Kelleher. "Remember, rivers are very unpredictable. The flow and speed is faster and stronger than you think. Consider learning lifesaving skills that may make a difference, including learning how to swim and how to perform CPR."

New Hampshire averages 13-15 drownings every year. So far this year, New Hampshire has had seven drownings. Know the risks and take precautions before enjoying New Hampshire's beautiful waterways.

State and local officials offer these water safety recommendations:

- Never swim alone, always bring a friend.
- Swim in areas with lifeguards whenever possible.
- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) or life jacket whether recreating from a boat, along shore, or in the water.
- Know the conditions prior to heading out.
- Know where you will be swimming and the name of the area in case you need to call for help.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you will return.
- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Always call 9-1-1 to report emergencies.

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NH Department of Safety Commission Robert Quinn

NH Fish and Game Department Law Enforcement Chief Colonel Kevin Jordan

NH Department of Safety, Division of State Police Colonel Nathan Noyes

NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Commissioner Sarah Stewart

Concord NH Fire Department Battalion Chief Derek Kelleher