

November Drowning Toll Leads into Summer

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) has released drowning statistics for the month of November. There were six drownings for the month. The five year average (2004-08) for November is 10 deaths.

The November toll is down from the excessively high October toll of 15 drowning deaths.

WSNZ General Manager, Matt Claridge remarks: "A single digit monthly drowning toll is always good especially against the increase in recreational activity associated with the seasonal change and warmer weather."

The year to date (30 November 2009) toll is 90, compared to 89 at the same time last year.

The following observations are a reflection of 2009 year to date drowning data:

Activity

There have been more Boating related drowning deaths for the year to date (22) since 2002 when there were 23 for the same period. The highest number of Underwater related drowning deaths (eight) occurred since there were eight recorded in 2003.

Region

The Waikato region has recorded the lowest number of drownings for the year to date with eight since records began back in 1980. The average drowning toll (2004 – 2008) for the Waikato year to date is 15. Conversely, Otago has recorded the highest toll for year to date with 10 since 1996 (10). The annual average for year to date is five.

Site

Ordinarily, one third of all drownings occur in Rivers. For the year to date only 19% of drowning deaths have happened in Rivers. This reduction has been offset by increases in the typical boating environments of Tidal Waters and Lakes.

Ethnicity

New Zealand Europeans account for 54% of all drownings, followed by Maori at 21% then Pacific Peoples with 10%. Asian deaths contribute to 5% of the toll with the balance of 10% attributed to Other.

Claridge continues: “history indicates that summer (1 December – 28 February) is the period when 40% of all drowning deaths occur. All activities should be undertaken with care and safety in mind.”

Most notable activities and average drowning numbers for summer include: boating, fishing, diving and as always swimming.

“The simple messages are; never swim alone and always swim in a supervised area; complete a Coastguard Boating Education course before your first trip on the water; never put your life on the line whilst fishing; and always dive with a buddy.”

...Ends...

For more information or interview contact

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