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## Media Release

For immediate release



# Summer Time Fun Ends in Tragedy

January 2009 has been a tragic time for many families coping with the drowning of a loved one. Statistics released today by Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) show that 23 people drowned in January - nearly a quarter of the total 2008 drowning toll.

18 of the 23 drownings in January were recreational i.e people who intended to be in the water for recreational activities. This number of recreational drownings is the highest since 1994, and of grave concern to those in the water safety sector. The average recreational drowning toll for the month of January (last five years) is 10.

WSNZ General Manager Matt Claridge comments, "good weather and holidays increase the number of people recreating in water. Unfortunately, this combined with poor decision making and skills, plus a lack of understanding of the environment the victim was in at the time of the incident, has led to many unnecessary tragic deaths this year."

"Our waterways need to be respected and all safety precautions taken into account before undertaking any water based activities. January saw more swimmers drowning than in recent years. People swimming should make sure they know the environment before getting in the water."

Claridge continues, "being able to swim is the basic fundamental skill that all New Zealanders should have prior to heading into the water. While it cannot guarantee safety, it certainly increases chances of survival. There is no point being involved in the water if you do not have the skills and knowledge to be there."

"Nearly 90% of those drowned while recreating in January were males and all were over the age of 25 years, half were over 45 years of age. This shows it is not necessarily the youth who are making poor decisions, which is often the common belief. All New Zealanders are at risk, regardless of experience." Claridge continues "It is really disappointing to see experienced people in the water are not taking the care they should."



“WSNZ makes a further reminder to know your environment and be prepared before entering the water, along with reminding parents to ensure small children are well supervised at all times. There is still a couple of months left of the summer to enjoy our fantastic waters – let’s do it safely!”

Ends...

See attached:

1. January Drowning by Activity Statistics

**For more information or interview contact:**

Matt Claridge

General Manager

Phone: (04) 801 9600

Mobile: (027) 478 1836

Email: [matt@watersafety.org.nz](mailto:matt@watersafety.org.nz)

# Water Safety New Zealand

## Drowning Statistics by Activity January to January by Year



### Provisional Statistics

Activity	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Jan-09	
<b>Recreational</b>																						
Land Based Fishing																						
Angling		1	1		3	1							2			1		1	1	1	1	
Net Fishing				1										1			2					
Shellfishing			1					1												1	1	
Non Powered Boat																						
Canoeing						1																
Kayaking											3		1									
Rafting			2		1							1		1								
Rowing Craft / Dinghy	1							3			1					1				1	1	
Powered Boat																						
Jet Boat	1																				2	2
Jet Skis				1					1										1			
Over 4m		1		1	1	1	1	3								2	1				2	2
Under 4m	2		1		3						4	1	1			1						
Sailing																						
Fixed Keel Boat		1	1			1														1		
Offshore Sailing																						
Trailer Sailer																						
Windsurfing											1											
Underwater																						
Free Diving					1									1					1		1	1
Scuba Diving	3	1	1	2	3	1	1					1	1	2			1	1			2	2
Snorkelling	1		2			4			1		1				1	1	2	1	1			
Water Sport / Recreation																						
Board Riding															1					1	1	1
Boogie Boarding						1							1		2							
Diving / Jumping	1				1	1				1					1				1			
Other Recreation			1	1	2	1					1		1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1
Swimming	10	6	2	6	5	3	3	3	11	7	1	2	5	7	8	4			2	4	6	6
Tubing / Canyoning					1															1		
Water Skiing											1	1										
<b>Total Recreational</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>Non-Recreational</b>																						
Immersion Incident																						
Accidental Immersion	5	1	6	2	4	2	4	2	2	5	4	5	8	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
Rescuing Others	2	2	2					1			2		4		3		1	1	1	1	1	1
Occupational Related																						
Commercial Fishing	1	1	1			1	1							1	1							
<b>Total Non-Recreational</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Activity - Other</b>																						
Other Activities																						
Aircraft																						
Homicide												1										
Other Commercial				1			1		1													
Road Vehicle	1	5	1		2						1	1		4	1	2	2	1	1			
Suicide	1	4	2	1		1	2	2	1	1	4		2		1	2		2	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Activity - Other</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Drownings</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	

