



NEWS RELEASE

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Swimming Safe This Summer with Charleston County Parks

Ways to ensure a summer full of safe swimming fun

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) – Water is everywhere in the Lowcountry, and during the hot summer months, many people flock to the ocean, pools, and other waterways. Although a day of enjoying the sun and swimming may seem relaxing, we have to beware and prepare for the inherent risks of the water.



Drowning statistics speak loudly to the importance of learning and practicing smart water safety habits. According to the Center for Disease Control, 10 people die every day from unintentional drowning; of those, two are children ages 14 or younger. Fatal drowning is the fifth-leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths for children 14 and younger.

At Charleston County Parks, safety is a top priority. To ensure safe summer swimming, Charleston County Parks has seasonally lifeguarded beach swimming areas and lifeguarded waterparks. Lifeguards undergo extensive education and training on drowning prevention and recognition. Charleston County Parks employ over 275 lifeguards per season to ensure guest safety.

While lifeguards are the final link in the chain to prevent drownings, guests can do their part to ensure their own safety when swimming. Charleston County Parks and the [United States Lifesaving Association \(USLA\)](http://www.usla.org) recommend the following five easy safe swimming tips:

- If possible, swim in designated zones that are supervised by lifeguards
- Obey all posted signage, flags, warnings and lifeguards' commands
- Always go into the water with a buddy who can swim; never swim alone
- Inexperienced swimmers should wear a properly fitting U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when enjoying the water
- Designate a water watcher to supervise children in and around water

It is essential for beach swimmers to learn how to identify rip currents and be able to escape from them. Rip currents are identified by choppy and different colored water, a break in a wave pattern or foam and seaweed moving out towards the sea. Charleston County Parks advises swimmers not to panic or swim against the current if you are caught in one. The best way to escape is to swim along the shoreline and swim back to the shore in a diagonal direction to move away from the rip current. In addition, swimmers are urged to wave to get the lifeguards' attention so they can assist in a rescue.

Learning to swim is a great way for people to feel more comfortable in and around the water. Charleston County Parks offers swim lessons throughout the summer at West County Aquatic Center in Hollywood. Lessons are broken down into age groups: Baby/Tot (6 months to 3 years old), Preschool (3 to 6 years old), Youth (6 to 13 years old), and Teen/Adult (13 years old and up). Lesson curriculum varies based on participant's swimming experience level and comfort in the water. Each session of 4 lessons is \$25 per participant. To learn more about and register for swim lessons at Charleston County Parks, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com.



For more information on water safety and Charleston County Parks' beach parks, aquatic facilities, and swim lessons, call 843-795-4386 or visit CharlestonCountyParks.com.

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six regional parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a skate park, a historic plantation site, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. CCPRC also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, and much more. For more information on CCPRC, call 843-795-4386, download the Charleston County Parks mobile app, or visit www.charlestoncountyparks.com.