
Lessons learned

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Who undertook this research?

The Royal Lifesaving Society Canada has undertaken this research by investigating major aquatic incidents and drownings at supervised sites over the years.

The Issue

There was no consolidation of data from these incidents and no resulting change to policy or training because no organization actually tracked this data nor came forward on a consistent basis to offer recommendations to aquatic facility operators.

Community participation

Many of these operators who suffered these losses came forward and helped confirm the details and often helped deliver the presentations and recommendations.

Aims of work

To gather data, determine similarities in these incidents, and formulate recommendations that will reduce incidents and water related drownings. Often regulatory change, operational modification and education were the result.

Target group

For the most part the public, aquatic facility operators, and government were the target markets. This was focused first as a provincial action but became issues became national.

What did you do

Water related incidents were reviewed and several selected as representative of several key issues. Recommendations were formulated and passed on to operators. These real life situations showed how incidents can really happen and the learning that can result. This learning resulted in changes to regulation, procedures which in turn reduced the frequency of these incidents.

Monitoring

Drowning statistics for supervised facilities where the focus of our work. In addition unsupervised sites were also examined and standards developed.

Achieved it objective

Change is slow and so some improvement has occurred.

Benefits

Real life examples have visually shown supervisory staff that incidents can occur and the review of these incidents have helped shape policy and regulatory revision thereby enhancing safety in aquatic facilities.

Challenges

The fear to share with others and be judged along with the legal implications of data sharing has been the challenges. By reinforcing that they can help others to perhaps change the way they do things and save a life has helped.

Conclusion

There have been several policy and regulatory changes. A new admission standard for aquatic facilities imposing more responsibility on the guardian is one major change.

Description of session

This session will review major aquatic related incidents that have occurred in a variety of aquatic settings including swimming pools and waterfronts. Each case will be reviewed in detail and with the help of diagrams and photographic resources the circumstances of each incident will be identified. Discussion will then centre around the lessons we have learned as a result of these incidents and the regulatory, guidelines and operational changes we have made to enhance safety and reduce the likelihood of this type of incident from re-occurring. The session will focus on a review of the 'Lessons Learned Resource Guide' which contains, case descriptions, photographs and a training strategy for aquatic staff training sessions.

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