



## **CAL FIRE: Protecting Against Water-Related Dangers During the Summer**

As the summer heat intensifies, water-related activities become increasingly popular. However, it's important to remember that water-related dangers can pose significant risks.

This year, it is expected that some water-related activities could have an added danger as this winter's storms brought recording-breaking snowfall.

When the snowpack reached its peak in April this year, it held approximately 40 million acre-feet of water, nearly as much as the total capacity of all the state's reservoirs combined. Along with California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR), CAL FIRE is urging the public to take extra precautions and to be aware of cold-water dangers this spring and summer to avoid a tragedy. The series of winter storms is causing rising river and stream flow levels not seen in years. The eventual spring warm-up will bring fast flows and cold temperatures when all that snow starts to melt.

Rising water levels in rivers and streams will be very cold, very fast and can easily overwhelm those that aren't prepared or don't heed warnings.

As California's all-risk response agency, CAL FIRE plays a crucial role in ensuring public safety during the summer months. With our expertise and proactive approach, we work tirelessly to mitigate and address water-related dangers, keeping communities safe.

### **Drowning Prevention and Lifesaving Efforts:**

CAL FIRE knows the importance of preventing drowning incidents. Through comprehensive [water safety](#) programs, we educate communities about the dangers of swimming in unsupervised areas or [unfamiliar waters](#). We emphasize the [significance of designated swimming areas](#) and the need for constant supervision, particularly for [children](#). Working closely with local communities, we even [employ lifeguards](#), such as at Pismo Beach, and train first responders to ensure a swift response in emergency situations, providing lifesaving measures and rescues when necessary.



*Figure 1 - A CAL FIRE lifeguard checks the water at Pismo Beach, Calif., for swimmers in need of aid.*

### **Water Rescue:**

Our first responders are not only well-trained in combating wildfires but also in [water rescue operations](#). They possess the necessary skills and equipment to respond to water emergencies quickly. Whether it's a swift-water rescue, [coastline responses](#), or assisting in boating accidents, CAL FIRE first responders work alongside other agencies to save lives and provide critical medical aid. Their expertise and swift response play a vital role in reducing fatalities and ensuring the safety of those in distress.



*Figure 2 CAL FIRE conducts training scenarios for swift-water rescue responses.*

### **Education and Awareness Programs:**

CAL FIRE recognizes the importance of [proactive measures](#) in preventing water-related dangers. Through education and awareness programs, we reach out to communities to promote water safety and provide valuable resources. These programs include [water safety workshops](#), [public service announcements](#), and safety materials that focus on topics like drowning prevention, [the dangers of rip currents](#), and the importance of wearing life jackets. By empowering communities with knowledge, we contribute to a safer summer experience for all.





**CHILDREN, INEXPERIENCED SWIMMERS,  
AND ALL BOATERS SHOULD WEAR**

***U.S. COAST GUARD-APPROVED LIFE JACKETS***

**Collaborative Efforts and Emergency Preparedness:**

We work [collaboratively with other agencies](#), including local fire departments, law enforcement, and park services, to enhance emergency response capabilities. We participate in [joint training exercises](#) and conduct drills to ensure seamless coordination during water-related incidents. By fostering strong partnerships, we strengthen emergency preparedness and improves their ability to effectively respond to any water-related danger that may arise.



*Figure 3 A CAL FIRE team practices water rescue scenarios.*

As an all-response agency, we play a vital role in protecting communities from water-related dangers during the summer. Through comprehensive programs, lifesaving efforts, and proactive approach, ensure public safety and promote water awareness. By staying vigilant, following water safety guidelines, and taking advantage of the educational resources, individuals can enjoy water activities while minimizing risks. Our commitment to safeguarding communities serves as a reminder of the importance of preparedness and collective efforts in keeping everyone safe during the summer months and beyond.