**CAP health & wellness:** HSO Briefing: WATER SAFETY

**Purpose:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Bottom Line:**   * Risk to populations**: very low** **| low** | **moderate** | **high** * **Water recreation is a popular pastime** * **Safety is everyone's concern** |

**Overview:**

Things to consider when planning water sports:

* Everyone should learn to swim.
  + If there are non-swimmers in your group, know who they are
* Remember to use sunscreen.
  + Reapply it frequently during the day
* Don't swim alone
  + Have a swim buddy
* Don't run on a swimming pool deck as they are often slippery
  + No horseplay around the water
* Swim in designated areas in lakes and the ocean
* Swim where there is a lifeguard on duty when possible
* Children should be supervised
* No diving in shallow water
  + If you can't see the bottom or know what is beneath the surface, jump in feet first
  + Avoid a broken neck
* Children that don't know how to swim should NOT rely on pool toys for flotation
* Around water and on boats non-swimmers should wear USCG approved flotation vests
* When not in use, remove pool floats and toys.
  + Children find them irresistible and may fall in grabbing for them
* If there is lightning, it is time to go inside
* At the beach, pay attention for high surf warning signs and flags
* Rip currents can defeat strong swimmers
  + Rip currents occur where there is a break in a sandbar with a resulting strong offshore current
  + If caught in a rip current, relax and swim parallel to the beach
  + When out of the current swim to shore
* Use caution swimming around pilings and piers
  + There is often growth of potentially dangerous shellfish
  + Fishermen frequent piers don't get hooked!
  + Strong waves or currents may throw swimmers into pilings
* Be aware of the waves and currents at the beach

***Recommendations:***

Enjoy the water during the summer but pay attention to minimize risks.

**Questions**: **Contact your Region/Wing/Unit Health Services Officer or**

Lt Col Thomas Janisko, CAP

Senior Program Director, Health Services NATCAP

202-761-0348 / Thomas.Janisko@usace.army.mil