



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

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## **World Health Organization puts drowning on the public health agenda**

As Canada's leader in drowning prevention, the Lifesaving Society Canada draws your attention to the newly released World Health Organization's *Global Report on Drowning: Preventing a Leading Killer*. This is the first time the World Health Organization (WHO) has devoted a report exclusively to drowning. Its significance cannot be underestimated.

*Globally, an estimated 372 000 people drown worldwide each year, among them more than 63 000 children under the age of 5 years. Drowning is one of the ten leading causes of death for children in every region of the world.*

WHO's data exclude transport disaster and other drownings and WHO acknowledges, given the lack of data from much of the world, that the actual drowning totals are likely far greater than their estimate.

The WHO report identifies drowning as a vastly neglected area of public health and calls for a scaling-up of comprehensive efforts and resources targeted at drowning prevention including:

- global partnerships
- greater engagement and collaboration among stakeholders at all levels
- national drowning prevention plans
- improved data collection and further research
- implementation of effective prevention strategies

The WHO report covers drowning in all countries of the world across all ages and calls for a substantial scaling-up of comprehensive efforts and resources targeted at prevention. The report is a wake-up call for global drowning prevention action and a catalyst for renewed drowning prevention efforts here in Canada.

Eliminating drowning in Canada will take a collective effort. The Lifesaving Society supports the development of a coordinated national drowning prevention plan targeting communities at risk and the Society is committed to building an inclusive and dynamic coalition to produce and implement it. The Society will keep you informed of our plans on this critical public health issue.

This message is part of a Lifesaving Society collaboration with the World Health Organization. We ask you to share it among your colleagues who may be interested in this issue.

### **About the Lifesaving Society Canada**

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs,

Water Smart<sup>®</sup> public education, drowning prevention research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. Each year, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society's training programs. The Society has been researching and reporting on drowning in Canada for over 30 years.

**For more information, please contact:**

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To read or download the *Global Report on Drowning: Preventing a Leading Killer*:  
<http://www.who.int/publications/en/>.