

OPEN WATER SWIMMING



This leaflet provides general safety guidelines.
Always exercise caution and consult local information for specific safety information in your area.

Swimming Safely Near Piers and Harbours

Open water swimming can be a fantastic and exhilarating experience, but it's essential to be aware of potential dangers, especially when swimming near piers and harbours. This leaflet provides information on staying safe while enjoying open water swimming in such areas.

1. Know the Risks

Swimming within Harbours is not allowed but swimming near piers and harbours can also be risky due to the following factors:

- Strong currents: Water flows in and out of harbours with tides, creating strong currents that can be challenging to swim against.
- Boat traffic: Large vessels and boats may not see swimmers, leading to dangerous collisions.
- Swimming near or across harbour entrances: vessels and boats may not see swimmers, leading to dangerous collisions.
- Swimming at dawn and dusk: vessels and boats may not see swimmers, leading to dangerous collisions.
- Entanglement: Ropes, nets, and other debris can be found near piers and moorings, posing a risk to swimmers.
- Uneven terrain: Structures like piers often have submerged obstacles or sharp edges that can be hazardous.

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2. Tips for Safe Swimming

Follow these guidelines to ensure a safe open water swimming experience:

- Swim with a buddy: Never swim alone; having a companion can be a lifesaver in an emergency.
- Observe the area: Look for hazards like boats, buoys, and submerged objects before entering the water.
- Stay visible: Wear brightly coloured swim caps and use safety floats or buoys with flags to make yourself visible to boats.
- Stay close to the shore: Avoid swimming too close to the piers and harbours' structures to reduce the risk of getting caught in currents or debris.
- Be cautious of currents: Know the tide times and currents for the area you're swimming in, and plan your swim accordingly.
- Keep an eye on the weather: Sudden changes in weather can impact water conditions; be prepared to exit the water if necessary.
- Know your limits: Don't push yourself too hard; if you feel tired or unsafe, exit the water immediately.

3. What to Do in an Emergency

In case of an emergency, follow these steps:

- Signal for help: Wave your arms and shout to alert others.
- Float or tread water: Conserve your energy and stay afloat.
- Swim parallel to the shore: If caught in a current, swim parallel to the shoreline to escape its pull.

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- Stay calm: Panic can make situations worse. Stay as calm as possible.

- Call for assistance: If you have a phone with you, call emergency services or the coastguard.

4. Share Your Plan

Before swimming, let someone know your plans. Share your intended route and estimated return time. This way, if you don't return on time, someone will know to alert authorities.

Remember: Safety should always be your top priority when open water swimming. Being aware of potential risks and taking precautions will help ensure that your swim is both enjoyable and safe.

Stay Safe and Enjoy Your Swim!

Coastguard: 999

For further information you can visit our website www.gov.im/harbours/

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