

Water safety

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) would like you to enjoy water safely. With the long school holidays ahead many of you will be going on holiday and having the opportunities to play in and around water.

Please remember the following rules

1. Always take safety advice – read the signs at the edge of the water. They will warn you of the dangers. Know what the signs mean and do what they tell you.
2. Do not enter lakes, pools, rivers, quarries and canals to cool off. They all have hidden dangers in and around them. The water is extremely cold. It is very dirty, full of rubbish, contaminated with disease and has hidden currents that can drag you under and away. The sides are often steep, slippery and crumbly which can make it very difficult to climb back out.
3. Use swimming pools in hot weather. They have lifeguards, are warmer and clean, have steps to climb in and out, have depth markings and have no underlying currents.
4. Do not jump off bridges in to water. You won't know how deep the water is and you could be very seriously injured.
5. Never play by water alone. Go together. Ensure you stay with friends and preferably an adult. Make sure an adult knows where you are and what time you are expected home.
6. If you see somebody in difficulty in water, get help immediately. Shout for help and call 999. Remember HWFRS is a fire and Rescue Service. Do not jump into the water to rescue someone. Try throwing a buoyancy ring if one is available (empty plastic bottles may help!) or encourage an adult to lie on the ground and reach out with a long object such as a branch or rope.
7. If visiting the sea side, read all signs carefully. Identify the flags telling you where it is safe to swim and where it is not safe. If a red flag is flying do not enter the water. If a red and yellow flag is flying it means the beach is being patrolled, so see where the life guards are. Read tide notices.
8. Watch out for currents and never go out of your depth. Be aware when playing with inflatable toys. You can very easily and quickly drift out into deep water. Do not jump off rocks into the water.
9. Never go in the water alone and use land marks constantly to check your position.
10. If you do get into trouble, shout for help and wave your arms and try and adopt a floating position.