



Derbyshire
Fire & Rescue Service
Making Derbyshire Safer Together



Making Derbyshire Safer Together

Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**
Making Derbyshire Safer Together

19 APRIL 2020

BE WATER AWARE

The whole country may be in lockdown, but Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service (DFRS) still wants to raise awareness of water safety and encourage people to Be Water Aware. The Service is therefore supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) week long drowning prevention campaign which runs from the 20th - 26th April 2020.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Prevention Station Manager, Kevin Page said:

“We know when the lockdown restriction is relaxed, people will be ready to venture back outdoors and enjoy the beautiful weather to the full, so we want to ensure they are aware of the risks so they can stay safe when they are close to open water.

“We are also aware that many people will be taking their daily exercise close to open water, so we want to make sure they are aware of the risks, especially when you consider that runners and walkers have the highest incidence of accidental drowning, accounting for 27% of all accidental drownings nationally in 2018.”

In 2018:

- 263 people accidentally drowned in the UK
- Around 50% of these people just happened to be near water and had no intention of entering the water
- 87% of these fatalities were male
- 77 UK nationals, mainly tourists, drowned whilst abroad in 2018

NFCC's Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Lead, Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker, said:

email: enquiries@derbys-fire.gov.uk
www.derbys-fire.gov.uk

Gavin Tomlinson MBA MIFireE
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



"We want people to enjoy spending time in and around water safely. Most people would be shocked to hear 263 people lost their lives last year while spending time near water because they were unaware of the risks and unprepared for the scenario of ending up in the water.

"By highlighting this issue and making sure simple safety messages reach them, we hope to reduce the number of these needless and preventable deaths."

Drowning Prevention Advice:

- When out walking, or running close to water, keep away from the water's edge, especially after rain when the ground may be slippery or unstable
- Never enter the water to try and help a person or animal - always call 999 and use any water rescue equipment if it is available
- If you are spending time near water make sure you would know what to do if you happened to fall in. The advice is not to panic, float on your back and then either call for help, or swim to safety
- If you've had alcohol don't enter the water and avoid walking routes near water
- If you are spending time near water - whether at home or abroad make sure you are familiar with local safety information and children are fully and actively supervised

Nationally fire and rescue services have successfully reduced the number of fire deaths by focusing on prevention work and now we must apply the same principle to tackling drowning. Response is not enough - we must prevent drownings.

You can follow our advice by looking out for #BeWaterAware on social media.

ENDS