OPEN WATER: DON'T TAKE THE RISK

Swimming in or playing near rivers and canals may seem like a great idea, particularly on a warm day, but it could all end in tragedy. DON'T take the risk.

THE WATER IS COLD...

...even on very warm days, rivers and canals contain water barely above 10 degrees. Sudden immersion can lead to **cold water shock**, which can cause gasping and intake of water.

This can be deadly in a matter of seconds.

DID YOU KNOW?

Even the narrowest of rivers can be considerably deep. Rivers are subject to strong flow and **hidden currents** which can trouble even the strongest of swimmers.

WHAT LIES BENEATH?

The water is untreated and can make you ill.

Canals and rivers contain pollutants, sewage and often unseen underwater obstructions and snag hazards.

Debris under the water such as shopping trolleys, broken glass and cans can cause **injury** or **trap** you.

Remember, there are no lifeguards to help you at your local river, lake, canal or dam.

Rivers can be very difficult to climb out of, especially with steep or slimy banks. Stay clear of rivers with steep or unguarded banks.

IN AN EMERGENCY...NEVER enter the water to try and help a person or animal. You could get into difficulty yourself. Instead, dial 999 and use any water rescue equipment that is available.

If you fall into the water unexpectedly, fight your instinct to thrash around. Instead, lean back, extend your arms and legs & float.

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BEACH SAFETY: KNOW THE DANGERS

MUD AND QUICKSAND

Large areas of the coast can have mud and quicksand which can cause you to get trapped and risk drowning.

REDUCE THE RISK

Check tide times

Follow warning sign advice

Avoid crossing estuaries and mud where there can be hidden channels or fast water

If trapped, **sit back and spread your weight evenly across the surface**

Stop others from trying to help you as they may get stock

Call **999** immediately and ask for the **Coastguard**

Strong currents can sweep inflatables and people out to sea

FOLLOW THE FLAGS

There are lifeguards in the area. Swim between the two flags.

Do not enter the water. There could be unseen dangers such as currents.

No swimming in this area. There may be non-powered watercraft such as surfboards, kayaks, etc. in this area.

IF YOU SEE SOMEONE STRUGGLING:

PHONE 999

Tell them to FLOAT on their back

THROW them something to help them float

TOP TIP
ALWAYS GO TO A BEACH WITH A **LIFEGUARD**