



**The OSCAR  
Water  
Safety  
Handbook**



OSCAR activities in the water provide a great opportunity to relax, let off energy, build confidence and learn to safely enjoy water-based recreation.

People can have quite different levels of experience, confidence and capability around water. We hope this information will help you to feel more confident, safe and certain about your supervision of water activities. We encourage you to freely discuss any of the information with your supervisor and staff colleagues and ask any questions in order to clarify your role and responsibilities during water activities.

### **Our Expectations of OSCAR Staff Supervising Children in the Water**

- Follow all program rules and procedures for water safety: those in this handbook and also in our Water Safety Policy.
- Carry out all supervision duties diligently and professionally.
- Please talk to your supervisor if you have any concerns about supervising water activities or if your ability to supervise may be impaired in any way.

CONSTANT SUPERVISION IS VITAL IN OR NEAR WATER

- Be watching at ALL times
- Be prepared to provide IMMEDIATE assistance
- Children must be able to SEE and HEAR you - you must be able to SEE and HEAR them

***It only takes 20-30 seconds to drown***

*be in a position which enables you to SCAN the area within 10 seconds and begin effective RESCUE within 20 seconds*

## Prepare for Water Activities

POOL EXPERIENCES CAN BE FUN AND QUITE MANAGEABLE, BUT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN CASUALLY.

It is very important to PLAN before going to the pool	Have some fun activities to provide STRUCTURE
INTERACTION with swimmers is a key element of supervision	ANTICIPATE behaviour and ACT QUICKLY to get things back on track

### Some Water Activities for OSCAR Time

#### Will it float?

Get each kid to bring in an item from home, and have a few big ones on hand to also include. Talk to about pool safety aids, then predict whether their item will sink or float. What are some other alternatives to traditional rescue aids?

*Here are a few ideas to get started:*



#### Make a Whirl Pool

Have all the participants run in a circle in the same direction. Once you get a whirl pool started encourage the participants to try to float.

#### Create a Rip

Create two whirl pools side by side to create a shoot. Participants can then have turns floating through the rip. This can lead into a discussion about beach safety.

*What other games can you think of?*

Trains	Stuck in the mud
Rob the nest	Simon says
Obstacle Course	Sea Horse (Noodle) relays

Almost any game you play on land can be adapted to play in a pool.

If you are trying a new activity, check with your supervisor first – polices and rules might need to be updated.

## Water Safety: Aware, Alert, Responsible

*“In 2006, 4000 people made an ACC claim due to an injury while swimming. A significant number of these injuries occurred in and around swimming pools. The most common causes of injury included: slips, trips and falls, often resulting in fractures, dental injuries, sprains and strains. Pools can be fun places but need to be treated with respect.” Source: Be Pool Safe Water Safety New Zealand, 2007*

### What might go wrong?

- 👉 Slips and falls while moving around the poolside.
- 👉 Children injured by pushing, trampling, hitting the bottom (spinal injuries & head injuries).
- 👉 Children out of depth – even in shallow pools, especially younger children.  
*Children sink very quickly to the bottom of the pool when in difficulty. Once there, it is much harder to see them.*
- 👉 REMEMBER – drowning is silent.

## In & Around the Water

### 1. Supervising Pool Side

- You will be allocated a group and you must maintain constant supervision. A senior staff person will be monitoring the whole environment and available for support. Children may be put in ability groups and the different areas in the pool. Take note of pool depths and reinforce the boundaries.
- When supervising shallow pools it is not required to have staff in the water. POOLSIDE SUPERVISION IS GENERALLY MORE EFFECTIVE. If you are allocated to be in the pool, you are still expected to be actively supervising and monitoring behaviour. Check in regularly with other staff.
- Interact with children in the pool. If you are in doubt about a child’s safety, calmly signal them to come over to you & see if they respond – if you see any problem take immediate action.
- Specific rules may apply for some of our equipment – follow directions from your supervisor.
- Manage your tiredness by regularly moving around your allocated zone, frequently scanning and accounting for your whole group. If everyone had to leave the pool suddenly, could you account for all children?
- These are our signals in any emergency (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Take steps to minimise the effects of glare and reflection (e.g. use of Polaroid sunglasses)
- Remember pools are noisy – when giving directions, you might not be heard
- No cell phones will be in use (except supervisor).
- Do not get distracted by conversations or interactions with other people (e.g. parents, non-swimming children etc.). GIVE THE CHILDREN IN WATER YOUR FULL ATTENTION AT ALL TIMES.

### 2. Responsible Behaviour

- Each swimmer will have a buddy. Ask buddies to check-in approx. every 10 minutes (including a last buddy check when swimmers have left the water).
- Any swimmer leaving the pool must let a staff member know!
- Children must use safe ways to enter the water – feet first, using steps or sit & turn off side.

CONTINUES OVER

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