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Press Release Surfing Medicine International (SMI)

World Drowning Prevention Day – 25 July 2025

Today we want to call on all surfers to *share your stories* on water safety to raise awareness on drowning .

We strongly encourage everyone to get trained in lifesaving and cpr, because one day they can make the difference. Furthermore, SMI encourages surfers to do a proper risk assessment before entering the water and to obtain training in lifesaving, including board rescue. (WHO recommendations¹ confirm this). Especially because surfers can become a victim instead of rescuer when they are not trained to do so. In addition, we promote preventive communication by warning people on the beach and in the water before they get in trouble.

From scientific data we know:

- Surfers are at risk of drowning, this is the most common cause of death in surfers and bodyboarders in Australia².
- At the same time, surfers prevent drowning by acting as lifeguards, watching swimmers, and rescuing those in trouble, even on lifeguarded beaches^{1,3}.
- The more experienced the surfer, the more likely they are to have rescued someone from drowning^{4,5}.

As surfers are often the first available help at surf locations, every surfer should be prepared to provide help effectively and safely.

Therefore, we also recommend all surfers to get trained in CPR. We hereby highlight the ILCOR consensus statement and ERC 2021 guidelines to give rescue breaths and chest compressions (if trained, able and willing to do so) for drowning patients in cardiac arrest^{7,8,9,10}.

As surfers are a large and important group (global surf population is estimated to be 17-35 million participants) we can play a vital role in raising awareness in our communities globally.

Let's raise awareness of drowning together by *sharing our stories*. Because one day, your story can save a life of someone in trouble.

Because,

Anyone can drown, but no one should.

#DrowningPrevention #Surfersaslifesavers #Surfersasbystanderrescuers
@WHO @UN @ISA @WSL @IOC @ILS

References

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8. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Basic Life Support: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Ba.pdf>
9. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Special circumstances: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Ca.pdf>
10. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: Pediatric Life Support: <https://www.cprguidelines.eu/assets/guidelines/European-Resuscitation-Council-Guidelines-2021-Pa.pdf>

Other resources to support your (organizations) contribution in the media:

- [World Drowning Prevention Day 2025](https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2025) (<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day/2025>)
- Get educated on drowning and surfing life support on www.surfingmed.com by joining and supporting SMI



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