

# Currents

Newfoundland Labrador – March 2026



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
The Lifeguarding Experts

## Understanding drowning: The importance of Accurate terminology

### Defining drowning and related terms

Various terms such as near drowning, secondary drowning, dry drowning, struggler, and DNS frequently appear in media, training sessions, and everyday discussions surrounding incidents of drowning. Each term serves to describe specific circumstances related to drowning, and it is crucial to understand their precise definitions for clear communication.

Drowning is defined as the process of experiencing respiratory impairment due to submersion or immersion in liquid. When drowning is fatal, it results in death. In cases of non-fatal drowning, the respiratory impairment is halted before death occurs. Non-fatal drowning incidents can lead to outcomes ranging from complete recovery with no injuries to severe injuries or permanent disability.

Although drowning is most commonly associated with fatalities, non-fatal drownings are much more frequent than drowning deaths each year. Individuals who survive a non-fatal drowning may face significant health challenges, sometimes lasting throughout their lives.

### The importance of accurate terminology

Using the correct terminology when discussing drowning is essential for several reasons. It helps prevent misinformation, ensures proper medical diagnosis and treatment, improves data collection and research, and facilitates clear communication among healthcare professionals, emergency responders, and the public.

Inaccurate terms such as “dry drowning” or “near drowning” can be misleading, potentially leading to misdiagnosis, delays in appropriate treatment, and confusion about what constitutes the actual drowning process—which is specifically defined as respiratory impairment resulting from submersion in water.

### Preventing misinformation

Employing medically correct terminology reduces unnecessary fear and misunderstanding. For instance, terms like “dry drowning” and “secondary drowning” have caused undue public alarm and increased anxiety, especially among parents, sometimes resulting in unnecessary medical consultations.

Accurate language also provides the public with reliable information about the real risks associated with drowning, emphasizing that drowning is defined by respiratory impairment, rather than by distinctions based on timing or the amount of water involved.

### Ensuring proper diagnosis and treatment

Using appropriate terminology allows healthcare providers to assess drowning incidents accurately and deliver suitable treatment, which can minimize unnecessary procedures such as imaging or antibiotics in cases where there are no symptoms.

Standardized medical records and terminology help ensure that individuals who develop symptoms after a drowning incident receive timely and effective diagnosis and care. Furthermore, outdated terms like “near-drowning,” “dry drowning,” and “wet drowning” have been retired from medical usage, as they do not accurately reflect the physiological processes or causes involved in drowning.

### Improving data collection and research

Unified terminology increases the integrity of data collected about drowning incidents. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) have adopted standard definitions of drowning to improve the quality and reliability of research in this area.

Consistent use of terminology enables researchers to analyze pooled data more effectively, advancing injury surveillance and supporting the development of robust prevention strategies.

### Facilitating clear communication

Standardization of professional language is crucial for all parties involved in drowning prevention, including the public, medical professionals, and advocates. A common understanding of terminology helps ensure a coordinated response across different groups, which is vital for effective intervention and prevention efforts.

## First Aid Must Sees

Over the past year, we've had updates and changes related to our First-Aid program. What follows will be a comprehensive breakdown of all the need-to-knows and Must Sees that apply to all First Aid Instructors, First Aid Examiners, First Aid Trainers, Lifesaving Instructors and Lifesaving Trainers.

### Before the course:

- Internally, the Lifesaving Society has decided to swap the CPR Level B, which was paired by default with the Emergency First Aid course, with a CPR Level C similar to the Standard First Aid course. This adjustment has been made to respond to market demand and the rising request of Emergency First Aid as a workplace designated course for low-risk work, while maintaining a manageable time slot for the course. This change will come in effect as of May 1, 2026.
- All courses delivered under the Lifesaving Society's curriculum, including our First Aid Program, must be organized through an Affiliate Member. Individuals are no longer able to set up courses on their own and submit test sheets. For more information on Affiliate Membership, please refer to Section 1 of our [Program Guide](#).
- Our First Aid Program has been realigned with the CSA Z1210-24 standards adopted by the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Changes in these standards include shifts in course titles: **Emergency First Aid** is now **Basic First Aid**, and **Standard First Aid** is now **Intermediate First Aid**. The content of these courses has not been significantly impacted; rather, the way the courses are delivered has changed.

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LifeguardDepot.com is the online store of the Lifesaving Society. All proceeds from LifeguardDepot.com support drowning prevention and the development of young leaders through Lifesaving Sport.

## OFFICE CLOSED FOR EASTER

Happy Easter! The Lifesaving Society's office will close Friday, April 3 and Monday, April 6 for Easter weekend. We reopen Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 a.m.

## JOIN US AT OUR AGM

The Lifesaving Society Newfoundland and Labrador Annual General Meeting will be held at City Hall on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in St. John's. Members and friends of the Society including instructors, examiners and affiliate representatives are cordially invited to attend. Invitations to the AGM will circulate to members by email. To update your email address, contact CEO [Raegan Wiseman](#).

## SUPPORT DROWNING PREVENTION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The Lifesaving Society Newfoundland and Labrador is a registered charity that relies on the generous donation of time and money from its volunteers and donors. Those who donate \$25 or more receive a tax receipt and have their name published in the Society's Annual Report.

Support drowning prevention in Newfoundland and Labrador by [donating today](#).



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