



**National Water
Safety Management
Programme**



Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module

Guided Learning Unit



Safeguarding lives in, on and near water

This resource is the approved material for the RLSS UK's National Water Safety Management Programme and has been specifically designed to support your learning as you develop your water safety awareness competencies.

Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module (Guided Learning Unit)



National Water Safety Management Programme

Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module Guided Learning Unit

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Identification and Classification of Hazards	2
Identifying Risk and Implementing Control Measures	3
Group Management and Activity Management.....	6
Casualty Recognition	7
Panicking Casualty.....	8
Non-Panicking Casualty.....	9
Unconscious Casualty	10
Rescue Principles.....	11
Lifesaving Rescue Techniques.....	12
Rescue Priorities	13
Shout and Signal Rescue.....	14
Throwing Rescue	15
Reaching Rescue	16
Reaching Rescue using Rope.....	17
Wading Rescue	18
Entering and Exiting the Water.....	19
Summary for the sequence of rescues	19

Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module (Guided Learning Unit)



National Water Safety Management Programme

Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module Guided Learning Unit

Introduction

This is the guided learning, classroom and field based component of the Level 1 Water Safety Awareness Module. Building on the Level 1 Self Study Unit, we will explore concepts of water safety and develop our understanding of water safety management techniques. In addition, we will start to look at more detailed management of people around the water margin.

A key aspect of this unit is application of the knowledge acquired through risk assessment exercises, practical use of common rescue equipment and interactive workshops.

The guided learning session will take a minimum of 4 hours and includes group work. We recommend you read through this Guided Learning Unit before attending the guided learning session

Please note that the NWSMP Level 1 Water Safety Awareness Module is land-based and there is no requirement for the candidate to enter the water.

Learning Outcomes

The Level 1 Water Safety Awareness Module (comprising of a Self Study Unit and this Guided Learning Unit) is primarily knowledge based. However, basic principles of rescue will be discussed and candidates will practise land-based rescue techniques. By the end of the module candidates will be expected to:

- Identify a range of open water hazards
- Understand the effects of cold water immersion on the body
- Demonstrate a minimum level of water safety and personal safety awareness
- Show an understanding of legal requirements and duty of care applicable to group leaders
- Understand principles of water safety, group management and risk assessment
- Show an understanding of the principles of rescue and rescuer safety
- Understand how to manage a group safely around the water margins
- Understand key water safety issues
- Apply practical risk management skills and show confidence in applying appropriate controls
- Demonstrate competence in land-based 'Emergency Response' rescues

Identification and Classification of Hazards

Practical Hazard Identification:

In the Level 1 Self Study Unit we discussed the need to identify hazards that could harm you, your group or any other users in the vicinity. Let's look more closely at how we go about identifying hazards.

Pre-visit and Trial

You cannot beat in-depth knowledge of a site. However, you may not always already have this knowledge. If you are unfamiliar with a particular location, a pre-visit can be invaluable, allowing you to get a feel for the environment and hazards presented. A pre-visit may also provide you with the opportunity to review any existing risk assessments or operating procedures for the site, view maps and site plans, and talk to those familiar with the location (including managers, wardens, local fishermen etc). You may also consider performing a trial of the activity to be engaged in, using this practical experience to inform your safety management plan. If a pre-visit is not possible, it is still important to gather as much information as possible in advance of the visit.

Visual Inspection

Before any activity takes place, a visual inspection is vital (including a walkabout). Take time to look at the site from different perspectives. If a visual inspection has not been carried out during a pre-visit, one must be carried out on the day before any activity commences.

Group Discussion

For those managing people around the water margins, involve your team in identifying hazards through group discussions or even as part of the visual inspection walkabout. Through involving your group in identifying hazards, you can make them more aware of the dangers presented (plus they may present ideas that you have not thought of).

Classification of Hazards

Hazards can be separated into generic categories (as noted in the Self Study Unit). Following is a short guide to assist in classifying hazards (Location, Environment, People, Activity). Please note the guide is not exhaustive.

Location

Describe the location and environment. Is it urban with ease of access and proximity to emergency services, or rural where more consideration will be required to plan and manage emergencies? The site may actually be in the wilderness with no access to external assistance (at least for an extended period of time).

People

People can be the most unpredictable variable in running an activity. Consideration should be given to the age, maturity and mental and physical ability of your client group. Also, it is important to be clear about the extent of your authority and control. Other factors include:

- Group/ peer pressure
- Physical fitness
- Experience
- Competencies
- Behaviour – individual & group

Environment

What is the water type (e.g. lake, river, beach) and what hazards will this environment present?

The natural environment presents many challenges due to the dynamic characteristics of the elements and the speed at which they can change (transforming from a calm safe state to extremely severe and dangerous in the matter of minutes).

Activity

What will the client group be doing? Will the activities conflict with other users? For lone workers, assess the risk of the specific activities (e.g. sea conditions when water sampling).

Nature of activity examples:

- Walking near water
- Pond dipping
- Crossing water
- Paddling
- 'Getting in'/Swimming



Identifying Risk and Implementing Control Measures

Risk will be based on an overview of the inter-relationship of all of the above factors.

Identifying Control Measures

Control measures, as previously noted, are safety arrangements implemented to mitigate against risk. Controls need to be reasonably practicable and balanced against a cost benefit analysis. When preparing a strategy to reduce risk, it is important to apply common sense and concentrate on significant risks and not trivial risks. The Control Hierarchy listed below provides a framework to decide on the level of measure required.

- 1 Elimination or Avoidance
i.e. take away risk or 'don't do it'
- 2 Substitution
i.e. do something else (plan b)
- 3 Control source
i.e. modification – setting boundaries
- 4 Procedures
i.e. Safety Plan including 'Normal Operating Procedures', 'Emergency' briefings, agreeing rules, setting physical boundaries, identifying appropriate behaviour
- 5 Training/Supervision
i.e. appropriate qualifications and supervisory guidance
- 6 PPE
i.e. personal protective equipment

Recording and Communication

It is good practice to use a standard format to record your findings, hazards and risks, and log the procedures required to eliminate/reduce risks identified. A full safety plan would include who is responsible for what and when, with dates for review and an essential training plan required for staff highlighted. The risk assessment is a process (not a one off exercise) and should be communicated to all concerned so that it is fully understood and implemented.

Summary

The Risk Assessment needs to be incorporated as part of the Safety Management Plan. Proposed control arrangements need to be measured against cost and benefit. A term incorporating cost benefit increasingly being used is 'Risk Benefit Management'.

- 1) Define what is being assessed i.e. activity, place, people, combination
- 2) Identify Significant Hazards and who might be harmed
- 3) Identify Risk and Severity
- 4) Identify Control Measures and implement
- 5) Record your assessment details
- 6) Monitor and Review to make sure that what you intended to happen is actually happening. Review if and when changes to hazards/risks occur or following an incident, accident or near miss

Identifying Risk and Implementing Control Measures

Risk Calculator

There are a wide number of different risk calculators available to assist risk assessors objectively rate each hazard against risk, which is inherently a subjective exercise. Some calculators are more qualitative in nature whilst others are quantitative, such as the example model shown below (Risk Calculator).

To evaluate the risk, the likelihood of an event happening (on a scale of 1 to 5) is multiplied against the severity of the outcome if the event is realised (on a similar scale of 1 to 5). So, for example, an event with a likelihood of occurrence scoring 3 against a severity of 5 would produce a risk rating of $3 \times 5 = 15$. Using the Risk Calculator model below, where the product of the likelihood and severity are mapped, this score of 15 would fall into the red zone meaning this risk is unacceptable and immediate control measures should be put in place.

Risk Calculator

		SEVERITY				
		MINOR (1)	MAJOR (2)	CRITICAL (3)	FATAL (4)	MULTIPLE FATALITIES (5)
LIKELIHOOD	IMPROBABLE (1)	1	2	3	4	5
	REMOTE (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	OCCASIONAL (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	PROBABLE (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	FREQUENT (5)	5	10	15	20	25

- HIGH PRIORITY – The level of risk is unacceptable and cannot be justified on any grounds, immediate high level control measures should be applied.
- MEDIUM PRIORITY – The level of risk is significant and medium level control measures should be applied to reduce the risk as soon as possible.
- LOW PRIORITY – The level of risk is at a level where low level control measures suffice.

Risk Assessment Template

The following page (Example Risk Assessment Template) shows an example of a template to record the results of a risk assessment, considering the hazard, the outcome of the hazard and who would be affected. If the risk is minimal, existing control measures may be sufficient. However, if further control arrangements are required, the template provides the opportunity to re-evaluate the risk in light of additional control measures introduced to achieve an acceptable level.



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Example Risk Assessment template

Location:	Date:	Assessor:
Review Date:		
Site Description:		
Note:		

HAZARD	RISK / OUTCOME	PEOPLE AT RISK	EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	RATING	PROPOSED CONTROL MEASURES	NEW RATING

Group Management and Activity Management

Responsibility

Activity Leaders running field trips or activities have a moral and legal responsibility (duty of care) to those in their charge. This vocational training programme is focused on ensuring that those with responsibility for a group around the water margins understand the necessary measures required to ensure their safety.

For specific activities, always seek guidance from the acknowledged Governing Body, who can provide advice on equipment, safety and group management.

At the Site

As noted within Hazard Identification, it is good practice (if possible) to make a reconnaissance visit to a site before taking a group there, to identify any hazards and safety arrangements. Managed sites should have operating procedures which you should ask to see so that you are conversant with local hazards and emergency procedures. Facilities should be actively managed and provide changing arrangements, washing arrangements and access to refreshments.

General Activity Management

Organisations usually have a protocol for managing groups. Listed below is general guidance to consider when developing a Group Management safety system. It is good practice after an exercise (whilst it's fresh in the mind) to briefly think through what worked well and what maybe did not work so well, and jot some notes down.

When managing a group activity, consideration should be given to:

- A safety management plan should be available and all leaders conversant with these documents (including operating procedures, emergency action plan and risk assessment).
- Instruction to leaders so they are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the team.
- Clear instruction must be given to the group about activities, safety procedures, expected behaviour, including what to do if experiencing difficulty. Ensure that all participants understand instructions and be sure there are no language difficulties
- Clear commands and whistle signals communicated to the group.
- A clear understanding of individuals' ability in that particular activity.
- A register of people engaging with activity, head counting people 'in and out' and during activity.
- Access and egress points clearly pointed out.
- Those entering the water must have permission.
- No diving into unknown waters.
- Supervisor should be last to leave, having walked around the site.
- Ratio of supervisor to participants will be determined by the risk assessment.
- Medical statement for individuals with pre-existing conditions that require medication or assistance.

Water Management

SPECIAL NOTE: Where people are swimming freely in deep water, qualified Lifeguard cover must be provided. Where controlled/programmed activity is taking place, it may be appropriate to facilitate with appropriately qualified supervisors/leaders.

When managing a group in water, consideration should be given to:

- Ensuring sufficient safety/rescue capability is available.
- Creating a safety zoned area which is defined so there is no conflict with other users.
- Checking the declared swimming competency of the individual before the swim activity.
- Checking appropriate clothing is worn and additional items like blankets and dry clothing are available.
- Positioning a supervisor on the land and at a point of maximum view to provide continuous uninterrupted observation of the group.
- Refraction and reflection of light that may impair view of the group.
- Ensuring everyone understands their role in the Emergency Action Plan.
- Clearing swimmers from the water immediately if there is an emergency.



Casualty Recognition

We have discussed how people get into difficulty in water and also how they drown. It is important to recognise someone in difficulty in the water and realise that they do not always display the same characteristics. Contrary to popular myth, people drowning rarely make much sound or splash about. The casualty will be attempting to keep their hands in the water and silence comes from gasping for air. It is known as 'Silent Drowning'.

The position of the casualty and their ability will determine how the rescuer assists them and what rescue aids are required, in addition to the water environment and prevailing conditions being a significant factor.

There are three recognisable categories of casualties which, if identified correctly, provide you with important information and help you to develop a safe emergency action plan.

The three casualty categories are:

- **Panicking Casualty**
- **Non-Panicking Casualty**
- **Unconscious Casualty**

Whilst the three categories seem clear and distinct, the behaviour and condition of a conscious casualty may continue to change throughout a drowning or rescue situation. This means that you must always be vigilant to the casualty's actions and prioritise your safety at all times.



Casualty Recognition

Panicking Casualty



Notes

It is easy to assume that a panicking casualty will be easily recognisable because they will display obvious panicking characteristics such as waving and shouting, but this is not always the case.

Some panicking casualties will not make any obvious signals for help as they focus on maintaining a clear airway and staying at the water surface (although they may submerge repeatedly as they get weaker). This is part of the shock response to the early stages of drowning, and it can make casualty recognition and categorisation much more difficult.

Communication may be the clearest way to identify whether or not a casualty is in a state of panic. Panicking casualties are not able to communicate effectively, either because they communicate very little (shock response) or because their attempts at communication are so vigorous (shouting and waving) that clear messages between the casualty and rescuer cannot be achieved.

Casualty Characteristics

Before Rescue

• Actions

Ineffective - ranging from no significant arm and leg movement (shock response) to frantic swimming actions.

• Communication

Ineffective - ranging from no calls for help (shock response) to desperate shouting and waving.

• Body position

More vertical than horizontal in the water.

During Rescue

- May not be able or willing to respond to instructions or assist in the rescue (may not grasp thrown aids).
- Likely to attempt to grasp at the rescuer.
- Will remain vertical in the water.
- May calm down once the head and shoulders are supported clear of the water.

Rescuer Implications

- High risk of casualty grasping at and clamping onto the rescuer.
- A good defensive stand-off position must be used if the rescuer enters the water (although entry is not advised).
- Rescue aids should be used (although this may be difficult) and physical contact avoided.



Casualty Recognition

Non-Panicking Casualty



Notes

Non-panicking casualties may be more in need of assistance than rescue. They can be quickly identified as 'non-panicking' by their ability to communicate clearly. These casualties may be tired, weak, or injured swimmers, so the rescuer must communicate clearly with the casualty to help them to decide what actions to take.

Non-panicking casualties can become panicking or unconscious casualties very quickly. Non-panicking casualties still pose a significant risk to the rescuer if they enter the water.

Casualty Characteristics

Before Rescue

- **Actions**

Effective – using their arms and legs to maintain buoyancy and a clear airway.

- **Communication**

Effective – shouting and/or signalling for help.

- **Body position**

May have legs raised into a swimming or floating position, may turn onto their side or back.

During Rescue

- Likely to be able to respond to instructions.
- Likely to co-operate when support is offered (able to grasp rescue aids).
- May be able to rescue themselves (self-rescue) when given some support (an aid) and guidance.

Rescuer Implications

- Despite the apparent calmness, there is still a high risk of the casualty grasping at and clamping onto the rescuer.
- A good defensive stand-off position must be used if the rescuer enters the water (although entry is not advised).
- Rescue aids should be used and physical contact avoided.

Casualty Recognition

Unconscious Casualty



Notes

Unconscious casualties can regain consciousness during a rescue and in doing so increase the risk that they pose to the rescuer.

Depending on number of factors, including natural buoyancy, the casualty may be visible on the surface of the water or submerged.

Casualty Characteristics

Before Rescue

- **Actions**
Completely limp, no movement.
- **Communication**
No communication, no signal for help.
- **Body position**
May be floating at any point between the surface and the water bed.

During Rescue

- No response to instruction or rescue.
- Direct-contact rescue required (if it can be safely performed).
- May regain consciousness during the rescue.

Rescuer Implications

- The casualty will not be able to assist with the rescue.
- The casualty will require a direct-contact rescue.
- Landing the casualty will be difficult so the rescuer should consider moving the casualty to the easiest point of exit and calling for assistance throughout the rescue.
- Consider Life Support.

Rescue Principles

Rescuer safety is paramount and prevention is the best form of safety but occasions present themselves where an intervention is required and a rescue has to be initiated. Drowning casualties perceive the Rescuer as a floatation device and will grasp at and clamp onto the rescuer. This presents a very significant risk to the rescuer, limiting their ability to swim. Evidence suggests that in some cases the rescuer gets into difficulty and also drowns.

The contact zone is the area around the casualty that presents the highest level of risk to the rescuer. The size of the contact zone varies depending on the number of casualties and their characteristics. Very small or weak casualties may be restricted in how far they can swim or reach towards a rescuer, whereas large or energetic casualties may be able to reach towards a rescuer even when they are a few metres away from them. Even weak swimmers can summon incredible strength when in panic and seize a rescuer.

During water-based rescues, rescuers should stop their approach before reaching the casualty and adopt a Defensive Stand-off Position. This will allow the rescuer the opportunity to make a final assessment of the risks presented by the casualty and decide on an action plan before attempting a rescue. As a rule of thumb, three to four metres is considered a safe distance away from the casualty, although every incident is different and a dynamic assessment of the risks needs to be carried out at the time and an appropriate position taken.



When managing a group, the activity must be carefully planned to minimise the need for an emergency rescue. When prevention has not worked and the Leader is forced to make an intervention, there are a number of options available to him/her.

Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module (Guided Learning Unit)

Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

The lifesaving rescue skills are graded by the level of hazards and risks that they present to the rescuer. To help lifesavers to identify how dangerous the skills are, each skill has been graded using the **traffic light system**.



RED – These are the most hazardous skills to the rescuer because they involve deep water, entering into the contact zone, or direct-contact with the casualty



AMBER – These skills are hazardous to the rescuer because they involve entering the water, reaching into the contact zone, or indirect-contact with the casualty



GREEN – These are the least hazardous skills for the rescuer to use because they do not involve entering the water and use non-contact methods of rescue. However, these skills still present a risk to the rescuer

The traffic light level of each skill is not set in stone. The risk of performing a rescue skill can change depending on the specific situation, and the skills of the individual rescuer.

For example, a reaching rescue is typically an amber level skill, but if the rescuer cannot make the rescue using indirect-contact methods (with an aid), the level of risk may rise to red due to the heightened risk of using direct-contact in the rescue.

Using the Emergency Action Model (*Self-Study Unit*) will help you to fully evaluate the risks and prioritise your safety throughout a rescue.

 Green	 Amber	 Red
Shout and Signal Rescue	Reaching Rescue	Accompanied Rescue
Throwing Rescue	Wading Rescue	Tow with an Aid Rescue
	Watercraft Rescue	Direct Contact Tow Rescues



Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

Rescue Priorities



When there is more than one casualty, deciding whom to save first can be a difficult decision. When reaching this decision, there are two questions that you should ask yourself: who are the most likely to survive the emergency situation if they are rescued promptly (conscious casualties), and who from this group of casualties requires the most immediate assistance (casualties who are struggling to stay at the surface).

The Rescue Priorities are:

1. Conscious casualties who are at high risk of submerging.
2. Conscious casualties who are at low risk of submerging.
3. Unconscious casualties.

Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

The following rescue sequences summarise the main types of equipment that may be available, what equipment should be used and the method of rescue for each type of drowning casualty



Shout and Signal Rescue



Definition of the Skill

A land based, non-contact rescue, using verbal and visual guidance to instruct the casualty to self-rescue.

Notes

This is a **Green Skill** because the rescuer can stay out of the water, outside of the contact zone, and avoid contact with the casualty.

Suitable Casualty and Environmental Characteristics

- Panicking or non-panicking casualty.
- Close enough to hear or see communication.
- Able to respond to instructions.

Personal Safety

- Call for help before starting the rescue.
- Make sure the bank/beach area is safe.
- Keep back from the edge.
- Consider when the rescue attempt is too dangerous (and consider other options).

Rescue

- Attract the attention of the casualty.
- Keep eye contact with the casualty.
- Clearly instruct the casualty by:
 - Explaining and demonstrating (with your arms) the leg kicking movement.
 - Explaining and demonstrating a circular arm movement (doggy paddle arms).
 - Encouraging and reassuring casualty.
- Guide them to a safe exit point away from danger.
- Continually reassess your personal safety, exit route and the casualty until the rescue is completed.



Lifesaving Rescue Techniques



Throwing Rescue



Definition of the Skill

A land based, non-contact rescue, using thrown buoyant aids to assist the casualty.

Notes

This is a **Green Skill** because the rescuer can stay out of the water, outside of the contact zone, and avoid contact with the casualty. However, the risk to the rescuer increases if they need to approach the water's edge to throw the aid.

When using empty plastic containers as a throwing/ buoyant aid, a small amount of water in the container will increase both the distance and accuracy of the throw.

Suitable Casualty and Environmental Characteristics

- Panicking or non-panicking casualty.
- Unable to be rescued using a safer rescue method.
- Within throwing distance (consider wind interference).
- Able to respond to instructions.
- Strong enough to hold onto a rescue aid.

Personal Safety

- Call for help before starting the rescue.
- Make sure the bank/beach area is safe.
- Keep back from the edge.
- Consider when the rescue attempt is too dangerous (and consider other options).

Rescue

- Attract the attention of the casualty.
- Communicate, tell the casualty to:
 - Stay calm.
 - Keep their arms and legs in the water and use them to stay at the surface.
- Locate a buoyant aid.
- Throw the buoyant aid under arm, and keep elbow extended (straight).
- Aim for the aid to land in front of the casualty
- Communicate, tell the casualty to:
 - Hold the aid against their chest with both arms.
 - Look at you.
 - Kick their legs to move towards the nearest point of safety.
- Continually reassess your personal safety, exit route and the casualty until the rescue is completed.

Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

Reaching Rescue



Definition of the Skill

A land based, indirect or direct-contact rescue, pulling the casualty to the shore, with or without the use of an aid.

Notes

This is an **Amber Skill** because it requires the rescuer to reach into the contact zone, and it requires either indirect or direct contact with the casualty. Whenever possible, an aid should be used to keep the contact indirect, this enables the rescuer to release the aid (and casualty) if they start to get pulled into the water.

Suitable Casualty and Environmental Characteristics

- Panicking or non-panicking.
- Within reaching distance.
- Unable to be rescued using a safer rescue method.
- Firm bank/beach (not crumbling, slippery, too steep, or too narrow).
- Calm to turbulent water conditions (risk to rescuer increases with faster water flow).
- Any water depth.
- Strong enough to hold onto a rescue aid.
- Able to respond to instructions.

Personal Safety

- Call for help before starting the rescue.
- Use a reaching aid.
- Make sure the bank/beach area is safe.
- Lie down when reaching out to the casualty.
- Ask someone else to hold onto your lower legs for extra support.
- Hold onto something solid on the bank/beach (tree, railing, etc).
- Consider when the rescue attempt is too dangerous (and consider other options).



Rescue

- Attract the attention of the casualty.
- Communicate, tell the casualty to:
 - Stay calm.
 - Keep their arms and legs in the water and use them to stay at the surface.
- Locate a reaching aid (if available).
- Reach out to the casualty.
- Communicate, tell the casualty to hold the aid tightly. If no aid is available, try to grasp the back of the casualty's forearm/ wrist so that they cannot grab you..
- Pull the casualty to the edge.
- Continually reassess your personal safety, exit route and the casualty until the rescue is completed.



Lifesaving Rescue Techniques



Reaching Rescue: Rope Rescue

Definition of the Skill

A land based, indirect-contact rescue, using a rope as a reaching aid.

Notes

This is an **Amber Skill** because it requires the rescuer to reach into the contact zone, and it requires indirect contact with the casualty.

Suitable Casualty and Environmental Characteristics

- Panicking or non-panicking.
- Within reaching distance.
- Unable to be rescued using a safer rescue method.
- Firm bank/beach (not crumbling, slippery, too steep, or too narrow).
- Calm to turbulent water conditions (risk to rescuer increases with faster water flow).
- Any water depth.
- Strong enough to hold onto a rescue aid.
- Able to respond to instructions.

Personal Safety

- Call for help before starting the rescue.
- Make sure the bank/beach area is safe.
- Kneel or lie down when pulling the casualty to safety.
- Consider when the rescue attempt is too dangerous (and consider other options).

Rescue

- Attract the attention of the casualty.
- Communicate, tell the casualty to:
 - Stay calm.
 - Keep their arms and legs in the water and use them to stay at the surface.
- Hold the end of the rope in the coiling/throwing hand between your index finger and thumb, with your palm facing up.
- Run the other hand along the rope until it is outstretched in front of your body.
- Returning the outstretched hand to the coiling/throwing hand, loop the rope between the index finger and thumb.
- Repeat the action until enough rope is coiled for the rescue.
- Try to keep your coiling/throwing hand still during the coiling (to prevent the coils from tangling).
- Throw the rope using an underarm throw keeping hold of one end, and aiming over/past the casualty and upstream/upwind.
- Keep back from the edge and pull the casualty in:
 - In calm water, get down onto one knee or lie flat.
 - In flowing water, get down onto one knee or lie flat, hold the rope firmly and allow the current to swing the casualty to the edge.
- Continually reassess your personal safety, exit route and the casualty until the rescue is completed.



Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

Wading Rescue



Definition of the Skill

A water-based, non-contact, indirect-contact or direct-contact rescue, performed in standing depth water, with or without an aid.

Notes

This is an **Amber Skill** because it requires the rescuer to enter the water, and either reach into or enter the contact zone.

To minimise the risks as much as possible, the rescuer should use non-contact and indirect-contact rescue techniques in preference to direct-contact techniques whenever possible.

Wading may also be used by the rescuer to increase the accuracy and distance of throwing rescues.

Suitable Casualty and Environmental Characteristics

- Panicking or non-panicking.
- Calm to moderate water conditions.
- Within standing depth water (not deeper than the rescuer's chest).
- Unable to be rescued using a safer rescue method.

Personal Safety

- Call for help before starting the rescue.
- Use a rigid aid to test the waterbed.
- Stand side-on to any water flow with your legs spread to at least shoulder width.
- Slide your feet in a semi-circular motion whilst testing and keeping a firm footing on the water bed.
- Stay in contact with the land by holding onto a secure object connected to or supported by another rescuer on the land, such as a branch (if available).

- If there are multiple rescuers, form a human chain.
- Take a buoyant aid for personal use (if available).
- Avoid direct contact with the casualty (if possible).
- Consider when the rescue attempt is too dangerous (and consider other options).

Rescue

- Attract the attention of the casualty.
- Communicate, tell the casualty to:
 - Stay calm.
 - Keep their arms and legs in the water and use them to stay at the surface.
- Locate a reaching aid (if possible).
- Walk steadily toward the casualty:
 - Testing the water bed with the rigid aid.
 - Moving your feet in a semi-circular motion, checking the ground before transferring your body weight.
- Secure the casualty (with as little contact as is safe, preferably using an aid).
- Return to the land by the same path used to reach the casualty, or by the safest route to a point of exit.
- Continually reassess your personal safety, exit route, and the casualty until the rescue is completed.





Lifesaving Rescue Techniques

Entering and Exiting the Water

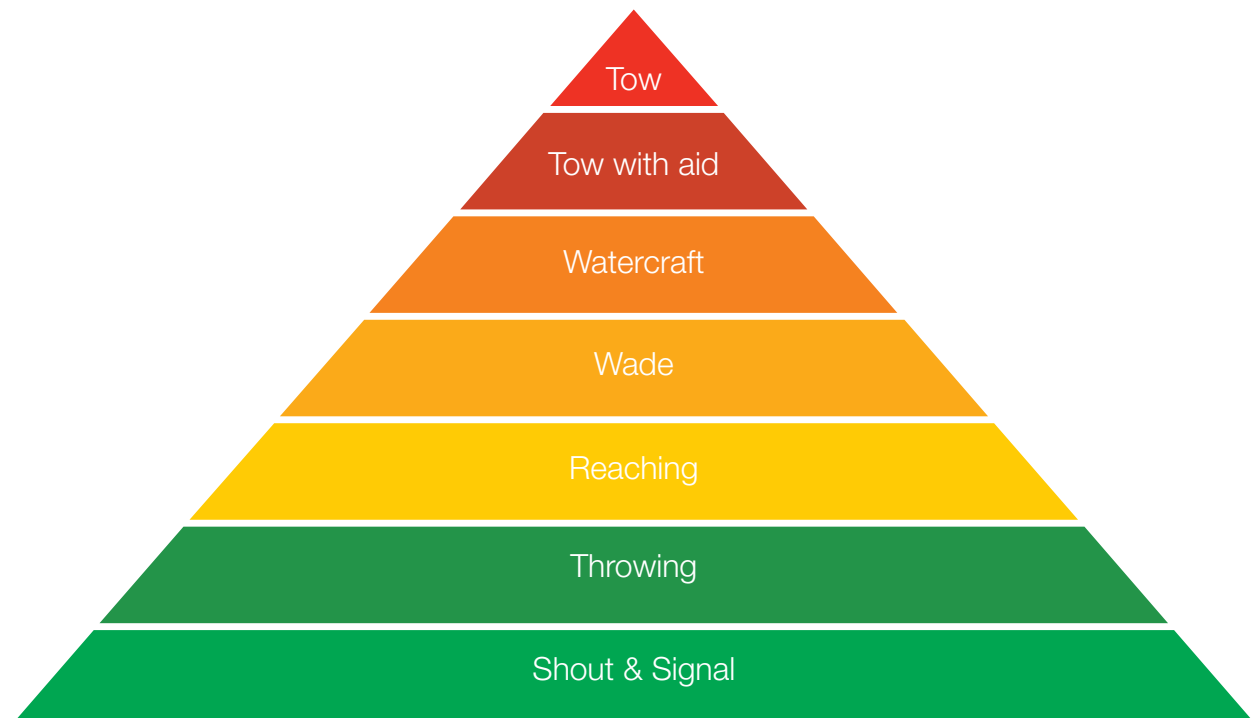
When deciding on a water based rescue, the rescuer must initially decide on a safe entry and ensure there is a safe exit available for themselves and the casualty. Considerations to include:

- Personal safety
- Height of the freeboard
- Water depth and shelving
- Water flow
- Water temperature
- Distance to the casualty
- Water clarity
- Underwater objects and uneven surface

A number of factors may be covered in a formal risk assessment. However, due to the changeability of the open water environment and specifics of the casualty, the rescuer will need to make a dynamic risk assessment and be clear about their action plan and communicate that to the team.

In the case of managing a programmed group activity, prior consideration should have been given to entries and exits before entering the water. However, mitigation plans need to be in place as water environments can change quickly requiring the rescuer to think and act fast.

Summary for the sequence of rescues



Level 1: Water Safety Awareness Module (Guided Learning Unit)