



DDS WATER SAFETY FACT SHEET

What is the DDS Water Safety Policy & Procedure?

- A Policy & Procedure designed to assist in keeping individuals safe when participating in aquatic activities

What is the definition of Aquatic Activities?

- All water related activities including swimming, boating, fishing, hot tubs, water park activities and those activities proximal to water.

What is the definition of Activities Proximal to Water as it relates to water safety?

- Activities Proximal to water are those at any location where there are bodies of water present at the intended destination that are open and accessible to individuals. This means that there are no barriers to prevent access such as secure fencing or padlocked gates. Contact with the water may or may not be intended. Bodies of water include, but are not limited to: streams, creeks, oceans, lakes, ponds, pools, hot tubs, wading pools, natural or man-made water areas or similar.

What are some examples of activities proximal to water?

- Proximal to water activities include, but are not limited to: picnics in a park where there are open and accessible ponds, streams, etc., feeding the ducks at a pond, unrestricted access to backyard wading (or swimming) pools or hot tubs, walks on the beach or similar.

There are three forms that are required to be filled out annually or periodically as part of the DDS Water Safety Policy & Procedure.

- The three forms are: The DDS Aquatic Activity Screening, The DDS Water Safety Plan and the DDS Water Safety Checklist.

What is the DDS Aquatic Activity Screening for and how do I access it?

- The Aquatic Activity Screening is a mandatory form that is required to be filled out for all individuals prior to participating in any aquatic activities of any kind. It is part of the Individual Plan whereby it is completed every year; or part of the Individual Short Plan in which it is completed every 3 years.
- This form is the only acceptable method for this information to be completed and there should be no other versions of reporting this due to the need for an accurate, consistent and safe plan of providing supervision and assistance for each individual at aquatic activities.
- Copies of this completed form should be disbursed to all members of the team that would ordinarily receive a copy of the IP or IP Short Plan. In addition, if not already considered, a copy of the aquatic activity screening must also be on file with the DDS Respite centers if the individual normally attends, with Public or Private Day Programs funded by DDS, and with DDS employees that may provide in home or community based services in the absence of the individual's caregiver.

What is the Water Safety Plan and when should it be used?

- The Water Safety Plan is a form to be filled out by staff whenever they are planning on taking individual(s) on an Aquatic Activity. It is designed to be completed, reviewed and approved prior to an aquatic activity, by referencing the participant's Aquatic Activity Screening. The purpose of this is to ensure that all individuals intending on going are able to participate and that their safety needs for supervision and supports are going to be met at the intended destination.

What is the Water Safety Checklist and when does this get completed?

- The Water Safety Checklist is a form that contains a list of safety considerations that individuals should be aware of when they participate in any aquatic activities when not in the company of staff or any type of supervision.
- This form is to be reviewed with individuals who participate or have access to unsupervised aquatic activities due to the fact that they do not have a need for 24 hour supervision.
- Staff or caregivers should review the content of the form with the individual each year between March 1st and May 1st, have the individual sign and date the form, and place it in their individual file and/or home or program water safety manual. The timeframe of reviewing this information is set to ensure that the individuals are reviewing this information just prior to the high aquatic season in Connecticut.