



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**

Governor Charles D. Baker
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DCR Reminds the Public of the Dangers of Swimming in Cold Water Temperatures

Boston- Thursday, May 7, 2015- With temperatures again reaching near 80 degrees over the next few days and into the weekend, the Department of Conservation and Recreation would like to remind the public of the dangers associated with swimming in extreme cold waters. Currently, water temperatures in Massachusetts lakes and ponds are in the 40's and 50's, while ocean temperatures remain in the 40's. Swimming in such cold waters, even within a short period of time, can quickly cause hypothermia in the human body.

It is important to note, that DCR starts guarding major coastal and inland beaches **weekends only** on Memorial Day Weekend. Beaches will not be guarded seven days a week, except for Walden Pond, **until Saturday, June 20, 2015**. Those who choose to swim at a location where a lifeguard is not on duty, do so at their own risk.

For an adult, hypothermia can set in at approximately 15-30 minutes in 32.5-40 degree water temperatures, and 30-60 minutes in 40-50 degree water temperatures. Cold water robs the body of heat 32 times faster than cold air, can cause the body to experience muscle spasms and cramps, and can cause the body to go into shock and begin hyperventilating. In case you were to fall into the water, it is extremely important to not panic, and to conserve energy to avoid exhaustion and unconsciousness.

Symptoms of hypothermia include: shivering; dizziness; nausea; increased breathing; difficulty in speaking; confusion; diminished coordination; fatigue; and an increase in heart rate.

It is important to remember that Massachusetts State Law requires all kayakers and canoeists to wear lifejackets from September 15th-May 15th. Children 12 years of age and under must always wear lifejackets while in a boat regardless of season.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Carol Sanchez, the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well being of all. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us

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