

Beach Safety

In Manitoba's Provincial Parks



Beach Safety Program

To many Manitobans, summer means a holiday at the beach. With more than 100,000 sparkling lakes to choose from, Manitobans flock to our provincial parks each summer to swim, wade and enjoy the cool, clear water.

To promote safety on our beaches, Manitoba Parks has instituted a Beach Safety Program to help you and your family enjoy Manitoba's waterways as safely as possible.



Beaches in Manitoba's provincial parks offer the following Beach Safety Program services:

- Safety signs are posted on the beach.
- Beach Safety Program brochures are available at staffed beaches and selected park offices.
- Park maintenance targeted at providing a safe beach and swimming environment.
- Some swimming areas are designated by a series of buoys. Swimmers should not go beyond these buoys. There is a second set of buoys several metres beyond the swim line. These are "keep-out" buoys and are there to keep boats from getting too close to swimmers. **The area between the swim line and "keep-out" buoys is a buffer zone. Neither boating nor swimming is allowed in this area.**

There are two types of beaches in Manitoba's provincial parks – non-staffed and staffed.



Staffed Beaches

The three staffed beaches in Manitoba's provincial parks are Grand Beach, Winnipeg Beach and Birds Hill Park. Swimming and wading are allowed at these beaches, and Beach Safety Officers are on duty.

Beach Safety Officers:

- provide public education
- patrol the beach by foot and kayak
- search for missing people
- inspect the beach for hazards
- administer first aid
- provide water rescues



Beach Safety Officers are not lifeguards. They do not supervise the swimming area. You swim at your own risk.

Flag Warning System

Staffed beaches feature warning flags on the shoreline. A flag on the beach indicates that Beach Safety Officers are on duty. Different coloured flags also communicate information about swimming conditions:

- **Green Flag** Good conditions. No unusual hazards.
- **Yellow Flag** Moderate conditions. Swim with caution.
- **Red Flag** Danger! Swimming not advised.
- **Red/White Flag** Emergency evacuation. Take shelter.
- **No Flag** No Beach Safety Officer on duty.



Non-Staffed Beaches

All the remaining beaches in Manitoba's provincial parks are non-staffed. No Beach Safety Officers are on duty at these beaches.

Beach Safety Signs

Both staffed and non-staffed beaches feature a variety of signs to communicate beach safety messages, identify Beach Safety Stations, post beach safety rules and signal hazards.

- **Green Circle** Recommended activities. For example, 'Swimming.'
- **Yellow Triangle** Warning messages. For example, 'Steep Drop-Off.'
- **Red Circle with a Red Diagonal Slash** Prohibited activities. For example, 'No Wading.'

Other beach safety signs are easily identifiable by the distinctive green border and 'Beach Safety Program' identifier. Beach Safety signs are posted in English and French at St. Malo provincial park.

Please Obey all Posted Signs!



Be Water Smart

There are many things you can do to be responsible in and around water.

- **Watch your children at all times. Never leave them alone in or near water.**



- Ensure children are properly supervised, especially when adults may be distracted by activities such as meal preparation, equipment set-up or packing.
- Ensure that you and your group know how to swim. It's the best way to stay safe in and around water.
- Swim only in the designated swimming areas.
- Know your swimming limitations and stay within them. Don't try to keep up with more experienced or stronger swimmers.
- Don't bring inflatables to the beach. Wind can blow them into the water where children tend to follow.
- Always check water depth before diving.
- Never swim alone. Use the buddy system. Always swim with a friend and watch out for each other.
- Don't consume alcohol before or while swimming. Alcohol impairs your abilities and judgement.
- Learn lifesaving and first aid skills so you can help yourself and others.
- Weaker swimmers and young children should wear a properly-sized life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD).

By taking responsibility and following these water-smart precautions, you can safely enjoy our beaches.

Drowning is Preventable!