

CPG on Accident Prevention and Safety Awareness – 3rd June 2025

Tombstoning Workshop – A free water safety education resource

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Water Safety Code

- Scotland's **Water Safety Code** underpins all of Water Safety Scotland's assets and resources
- This code was developed by our members and represents the key information needed to help keep people safe in Scotland's waters.
- The Water Safety code is available in English and the 8 other most commonly spoken languages in Scotland (according to the 2021 Consensus)

A dark blue infographic titled "WATER SAFETY CODE" with a hand icon. It lists safety rules with icons: cold water shock, frozen waters, safety signage, alcohol and drugs, water depth, other water activities, safe entry, and coast hazards. It also includes sections for staying together, emergency procedures, and a top tip about insurance.

WATER SAFETY CODE

Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers
If you are thinking of being near or entering the water, have you considered the following?

- Be aware of cold water shock**
- Keep off all frozen waters**
- Check for safety signage**
- Avoid alcohol and drugs**
- The depth of the water may hide underwater ledges, hidden currents and unseen items**
- Be aware of other water activities**
- If it is safe to enter the water, ensure you have a safe way out**
- At the coast, consider rip currents, wind and the tide**

Stay Together, Stay Close
It is better to go near the water with a friend or family member

If you are in trouble in the water, float until you feel calm
Lean back, extend your arms and legs
Float until you can control your breathing. Then call for help or swim to safety

In an Emergency, Call 999

If you see someone in trouble **DO NOT** enter the water

Look for a throw line or life ring to help whilst you wait on the emergency services

Call 999 or 112

TOP TIP: Thinking of taking part in a planned activity? To enjoy your activity to the full, check that your provider is fully insured, with skilled staff and the relevant accreditation.

Background

- **Tombstoning** is a water-based activity which involves individuals jumping into water from height; so-called because of the way a person falls and plunges into deep water, similar to the way a stone would
- Tombstoning is a high-risk, high-impact activity, that can have severe and life-threatening consequences
- Tombstoning has increased in popularity due to its proliferation across social media – resulting in mainly young people being at risk
- Despite Tombstoning's increasing popularity, the public can be unaware of the numerous hazards associated with the activity, such as **unknown water depths, strong currents, rocky waters, cold water shock**



The making of the Tombstoning workshop – Peer Led Project

- A PowerPoint was created by SFRS and RoSPA – with help from Scottish Water and Paddle Scotland. This PowerPoint included information on **cold water shock, hazards of tombstoning, and the dangers of tombstoning or swimming in reservoirs or quarries**
- In July 2024, RoSPA and the RNLI hosted a focus group with 6 young people from the Rural and Urban Training Scheme (RUTS) based in Penicuik, Midlothian
- The pre-existing PowerPoint resource was presented to the group to understand their thoughts and opinions on the resource. We were looking to understand if they wanted a different form of resource or any new suggestions or additions.



Focus group – Key findings

- The participants felt that the existing PowerPoint was interesting and informative. They stated that the PowerPoint was the best means of education for tombstoning rather than a social media campaign
- They suggested that an accompanying leaflet should be made as this would allow young people to take home information and mitigate feelings of peer pressure
- They suggested that the PowerPoint would benefit from the addition of a video from a first responder – specifically discussing what goes into a rescue



Water Safety and Tombstoning

Tombstoning: Water Safety extension activity/workshop

Learning objectives

- 1 To develop an understanding of the dangers of tombstoning.
- 2 To develop an understanding of how you can keep yourself and others safe around water, and how to respond in an emergency.

Estimated delivery time:
45-50 minutes

Equipment needed:
Screen, Audio

Presentation structure	Slide number	Timings	Presenter action
Starter activity	2	<5 minutes	<p>Settling activity as members of the group come into the workshop.</p> <p>Introduce yourself and explain that you're here today to talk about water safety and tombstoning.</p> <p>Questions for the group:</p> <p>Can you think of somewhere local that is similar to these scenes? What sort of activities can you do there?</p> <p><i>Note: It's advisable to research local bodies of water (e.g. loch, river, quarry, reservoir) prior to delivery, as they are helpful to refer to and may make the session more meaningful for young people as this scene can make the discussion more relevant.</i></p>
Learning objectives	3	<5 minutes	<p>Today, we're talking about tombstoning and water safety. Water can be fun but also dangerous, and sadly every year people are injured or drown in Scotland's waters. Some activities are riskier than others. Today, we will be looking at Tombstoning, in order to consider the risks with the activity and also what to do in an emergency situation.</p> <p>We're not here to frighten anyone away from enjoying being near or on water, but it is important to understand the risks associated with tombstoning.</p>
What is the problem?	4	<5 minutes	<p>Ask the group: What is tombstoning? Explain that tombstoning is an activity which involves individuals jumping into water from height, so-called because of the way a person falls and plunges into deep water, similar to the way a tombstone would.</p> <p>Why is it important? Unfortunately over recent years this activity has gained attention via social media and has increased in popularity, resulting in several people – mainly young people – being seriously injured or tragically losing their lives.</p>



Activity 4 In an Emergency, Call 999



If you see someone in trouble
DO NOT enter the water



Call 999 or 112



Look for a throw line or life ring to help whilst you wait on the emergency services

watersafetyscotland.org.uk

Follow this link for more information on tombstoning:
watersafetyscotland.org.uk/advice-hub/activity-safety/tombstoning

R&SPA
SCOTTISH ROYAL SURF Lifeline

info@watersafetyscotland.org.uk
watersafetyscotland.org.uk

TOMBSTONING

What is Tombstoning?

Tombstoning is an activity where individuals jump into water from height; so-called because of the way a person falls and plunged into deep water.

What are the main risks?
Tombstoning can lead to life-changing injuries and even loss of life due to hazards such as shallow waters, cold-water shock, rocky waters, windy conditions, currents, and many more.

If you and your pals are out enjoying Scotland's waterways, it is crucial you follow the water safety code:

- stop and think, spot the Dangers
- stay Together, stay close
- In an Emergency, call 999

To ensure your safety, it is important that you follow the water safety code:

- Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers
- Stay Together, Stay Close
- In an Emergency, Call 999



accidents don't have to happen

What resources are available

- Tombstoning workshop (PowerPoint)
- Tombstoning workshop lesson plan (PDF)
- Tombstoning Leaflet
- The Tombstoning Workshop resources were sent out to the full Water Safety Scotland membership list and PAWS chairs
- The resources are freely available to download through the Water Safety Scotland website:
[Tombstoning Workshop | Water Safety Scotland](#)



Tombstoning workshop – in use

- Loch Ken Trust Education Programme 2025
 - “In the afternoon we covered water safety with Castle Dougals Primary School, including the water safety code, cold water shock and how to keep yourself safe on and around water. It was great to talk to the children about tombstoning and raise awareness of the dangers with the new Water Safety Scotland Tombstoning resources” – Lindsay Stewart, Support Officer, Loch Ken Trust



Questions?

