

Electric Shock Drowning (ESD)

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Faulty wiring can release an electrical current into the water, thus electrifying the water. If you come into contact with the electrified water, it can cause your muscles to seize and you can drown. Electric shock drownings occur most often in fresh water which is conductive due to dissolved minerals and impurities. The body is more conductive than the fresh water. The increased conductivity of salt water reduces the fraction of the electric current that flows through the body. Therefore, ESD is less of a problem in the ocean.

If you feel any tingling sensations while you are in the water, swim back in the direction from which you came. Do not use a metal ladder to get out of the water.

Particularly in fresh water, you should not swim around boats, docks, and marinas that use AC electrical power for any purpose (boat power, electrical outlets, lighting, boat lifts, aerators, etc.).