



Minister for Housing and Public Works

Ref: HPW02591/13

16 SEP 2013

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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 22 August 2013 about petition number 2066-13 which relates to shallow water hypoxia (shallow water blackouts) and the need for warning signs around swimming pools.

I understand that shallow water hypoxia is a serious health issue, which can result in tragic loss of life. I expect many people would be unaware of the prevalence of shallow water hypoxia and its link to breath-holding games and activities, and I commend Ms Vincent for her efforts in raising awareness of this issue.

From 1 December 2010, the *Building Regulation 2006* has required pool owners to provide and display a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) sign so that it is conspicuous and easily visible to anyone near the pool.

CPR can be life-saving first aid and in the context of the pool safety laws, the requirements for resuscitation signage aim to provide people with enough information to enable them to respond to an immersion incident and increase a child's chance of survival.

The petition asks that a warning about the dangers of extended underwater breath be incorporated in the CPR signs currently required by the pool safety laws. I note that any warning aimed at preventing incidences of shallow water hypoxia would need to be communicated to swimmers before they enter a pool to be truly effective.

Given the more 'reactive' use of CPR signs, in that they are generally used after an immersion incident has occurred, I question whether CPR signs are the most appropriate method for warning of the risks of shallow water hypoxia. I am also concerned that the combination of the two messages would in fact take away from the effectiveness of both.

Instead, I have directed my department to develop information about the dangers of shallow water hypoxia for publication on the pool safety section of the Department of Housing and Public Works' website.

I trust this information addresses your enquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Mander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Tim Mander MP
Minister for Housing and Public Works