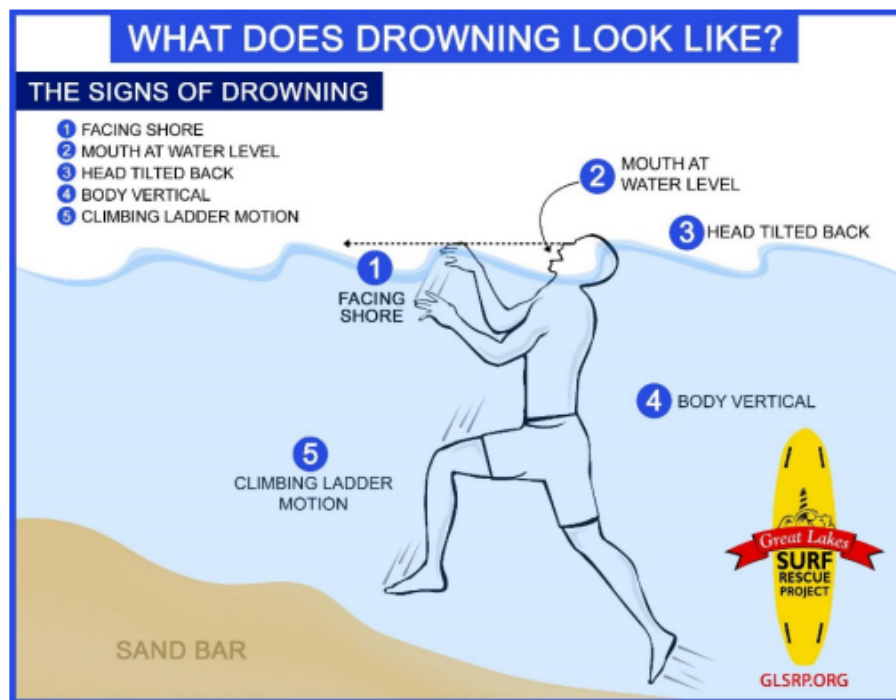


## Drowning Fact Sheet

It may not be immediately apparent that someone is drowning. A person who is drowning may be very quiet as they struggle to keep their head above water. They are physically unable to wave for help or cry out.

- They will often be vertical, not attempting to kick.
- They may appear to be trying to climb an invisible ladder.
- Their gaze may become glassy or unfocused.
- Their head may tilt back and their mouth will hang open very close to the waterline.
- Monitor anyone who is entering the water; periodically call out to them to assess ability to respond.
- If they are unable to respond, you may have between 20-60 seconds to respond before they go under.



### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- If you have identified that someone is drowning, immediately shout for help. The more people responding to this situation, the better.
- Have someone call emergency services.
- If possible, throw them a ring buoy and pull them to shore.
- Only attempt an in water rescue if you are a strong swimmer.

## Drowning Fact Sheet

- If you enter the water to attempt a rescue, make sure you have something they can grab onto and that you can pull to safety. This can be a ring buoy, rope, or even just a towel.
- Do not attempt to grab the person from the front, as they may panic and push you under. If you must, grab them from behind.
- If the drowning victim is not breathing and there is no pulse, start CPR.
- Even if they seem to be fine, seek medical attention immediately. There may be residual water in the lungs, which can be fatal if left untreated.

### **REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project [Water Safety](#)

*Illness, injury and close call events shall be reported by submitting an [SU-17](#).*

If you have questions or need support, contact EH&S's Field Safety Program at [ehs\\_field\\_safety\\_support@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:ehs_field_safety_support@lists.stanford.edu).

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