

Be River Safe

River Features

Notes for Teachers & Leaders

Learning to recognise river features and the dangers they present for a range of river users is life-long learning.

People get into difficulty in rivers because they either underestimate the force of water and the strength of the current or they cannot recognise the danger specific river features present.

Use of Be River Safe DVD material

The **Be River Safe DVD River Features** section demonstrates a range of river features that includes:

- eddies and eddy line
- recirculating waves
- buffer waves
- standing waves
- rapids
- waterfalls
- obstacles
- strainers
- undercut banks
- weirs
- the nature of the river bottom and the force of the current in a segment called **Reading the River**.

For some features, simple animation shows what is happening under the water.

Students' or trainees' understanding of river features will be consolidated and extended if they can observe the features in your local river(s).

You could:

- provide DVD footage or digital photographs of features in your local river(s)
- organise a visit to view the features from the river bank
- invite a local expert to discuss features of local rivers with your students or trainees or provide information on a visit to the river.



Be River Safe ... *know your environment*

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Resources provided

- Be River Safe DVD
- River feature footage from the Be River Safe DVD on the website: www.watersafety.org.nz
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – EDDIES
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – RECIRCULATING WAVES
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – BUFFER WAVES
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – STANDING WAVES
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – RAPIDS
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – WATERFALLS
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – OBSTACLES
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – STRAINERS
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – WEIRS
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – UNSTABLE OR UNDERCUT BANKS
- Factsheet: RIVER FEATURES – THE NATURE OF THE RIVER BOTTOM
- Activities about recognising river features



A note about using the factsheets: RIVER FEATURES

These factsheets can be viewed in colour on the website. They can be printed in black and white but it is easier to understand the feature if the factsheet is printed in colour.

Planning a trip to the local river

You may want to take your group on a trip to your local river to look at river features. This presents an opportunity to engage learners in planning an activity and assessing and managing the risks associated with the trip.

When taking students or trainees to the river you will want to follow the procedures established by your organisation but may find the Factsheet: PLANNING A TRIP useful.

Schools will want to refer to EOTC **Guidelines Bringing the Curriculum Alive**.

Discussion

Discussion about river features can focus on:

- identifying the feature
- working out what is happening to the flow of water over or around the feature
- understanding what is happening under the water
- understanding the opportunities and the dangers the feature presents for a range of river users including kayakers, swimmers and those who accidentally end up in the river current.

The discussion could emphasise that:

- **reading a river** is a complex skill that requires time and experience to develop and learners and inexperienced river users should always go in or on the river with experienced local river users
- accidents in rivers often occur because individuals and groups have not recognised the force of the current and the danger a particular river feature presents.

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