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St John Ambulance online first aid course designed to reduce drowning deaths

774 ABC Melbourne By Simon Leo Brown

Updated Thu at 2:08pm

People can now learn the basics of water first aid in just five minutes, using a new online course.

St John Ambulance have developed the [Water First website](#) in an effort to reduce the number of people dying from drowning.

There were 47 deaths in Victorian waterways from January to July this year, the highest number in a decade.

St John trainer Anthony Hasphall said the website was designed to show people "how first aid can save lives around water".

"The online program just takes around five minutes to complete," he told 774 ABC Melbourne's Richelle Hunt.

"It's showing you that those five minutes are really the most important time frame within an emergency scenario."

The website covers three scenarios including a drowning in a lake, a child floating face down in a pool and a toddler lying motionless in a bath.

Participants in the course are taken through a seven-step approach to dealing with emergency incidents.

The St John action plan is called DRSABC, which stands for danger, response, send for help, airway, breathing, CPR.

People who complete the course can print off and display a certificate which reminds them of steps to take in an emergency.

The website is designed to increase public awareness of basic first aid, and is not considered a replacement for a hands-on course.

"It's really designed to show people that they can do something within the first five minutes," Mr Hasphall said.

"You don't want to be in a scenario and be standing there thinking 'what do I do, what do I do?'"

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PHOTO: The Water First was designed to teach people the basics of first aid in five minutes, says St John trainer Anthony Hasphall. (774 ABC Melbourne)

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