

13
SPECIAL
FEATURE

Water Safety Awareness for the Hospitality & Tourism Industry

Text, photos and concept are the original work of **S. A. Martin**
Faculty of International Studies Prince of Songkla University

Rationale for Water Safety Education in Hospitality & Tourism

In recent years, there have been more drownings on an annual basis at surf beaches around Phuket than in all the islands of the State of Hawaii combined!

The following short article offers the concept and a very basic lesson plan for introducing English terms pertinent to ocean safety in Phuket. Realistically, this article functions to spark awareness of the topic for the hotel staff in Phuket adding to the potential of information reaching the tourists from a variety of mediums.

Many Thai (and foreign) hotel staff may have little understanding of ocean safety and related issues and the following information is meant to help educate hotel staff regarding the best way to communicate water safety information to hotel guests. Unquestionably, this is an awkward topic whereby no one likely feels comfortable giving a guest at the hotel a warning.

Introduction to Ocean Safety Vocabulary

Indeed, some of these terms do not have a Thai equivalent and translation is not straightforward. However, in the spirit of initiating awareness and imagination for the topic of water safety, we have begun to integrate some Thai language translations.



Lifeguard Tower in Phuket

A lifeguard tower is the place on the beach where the lifeguards set up each day and place their lifesaving equipment; it is used to watch and supervise swimmers in order to prevent drowning and other dangers.

หอคอยไลฟ์การ์ด

ENGLISH FOR PHUKET OCEAN SAFETY—LESSON 1

Words and meanings for Phuket Ocean Safety and Awareness for Hospitality and Tourism Staff

Ocean Safety Terms		Descriptions (for clarity these definitions are short and straightforward)
Beach Break	คลื่นแตกชายหาด	The type of waves that take shape near a sandy beach
Drowning	จมน้ำ	Death from suffocation caused by a liquid entering the lungs and preventing the absorption of oxygen
Lifeguard	ไลฟ์การ์ด	A water safety professional, normally wearing red shorts and uniform
Lifeguard Tower	หอคอยไลฟ์การ์ด	A place on the beach where the lifeguards set up each day and place their lifesaving equipment—an observation deck used to watch swimmers in order to prevent drowning and other dangers
Rescue	ช่วยเหลือ	When an individual, whether civilian or professional, rescues or assists another person (referred to as a victim) to safety.
Rip Currents / Ocean Currents	सानน้ำ	Strong near-shore ocean currents which pose a danger to swimmers; a river-like flow of water returning to the open sea.
Surf (N.)	คลื่นแตก	Generally defined as waves in the sea when they break upon the shore—or the splash and sound of breaking waves
Surf (V.)	โต้คลื่น	To ride an ocean wave!
Surfing	การเล่นโต้คลื่น	The sport of riding the surf, especially on a surfboard
Warning Signs & Flags	ป้ายเตือน, ธงเตือน	Signs placed on or near the beach advising beachgoers of water safety issues. Flags may be placed daily to indicate danger levels. In Phuket, red flags mean danger!

The Delivery of Water Safety Information

Given the unique and diverse tourism setting in Phuket, a mixture of people from around the world who speak, read, and accept information in various capacities water safety information is best delivered from multiple sources. Tactfulness and approach from hotel staff may need to consider the cultural background of guests.

Here are several examples of a simple dialogue, with an upbeat and positive tone (terms in red correspond to the table for Lesson 1):

- “Did you know that Phuket has **surfing**?”
 “Please be careful at the beach if you see any **surf**”
 “Did you know that there are **rip currents** on beaches here, especially when there are waves?”
 “Check to see if there are **lifeguards** on duty”
 “If there are **lifeguards** at the beach, smile and say hello to them, ask them where to swim safely”
 “**Warning Signs & Flags** mean it’s dangerous to swim on that day”
 “Have you seen the new **Phuket Ocean Safety Guide** featured here in **Thailand Surfrider Magazine**?”



As mentioned in this brief article, it is inevitably awkward to warn guests at the hotel about ocean safety, and indeed tactfulness and style used in the delivery of such warning may vary among cultures and languages. In a first step toward this, **The Phuket Ocean Safety Guide** provides a visual insight to the issues which can bridge the gap in language inherent dangers at our west coast beaches. Hotels can request that TSM deliver the free Phuket Ocean Safety Guide found in every issue of the magazine.

See Lesson 2 in our next issue!

English for Phuket Ocean Safety is a new lesson plan designed to promote awareness, understanding and communication among Thailand’s **Hospitality and Tourism industry**, especially for Phuket and Phang Nga.

For information or to share any comments on this article, please contact: phuketoceansafety@gmail.com



S. A. Martin was a Hawaii County Water Safety Officer during the 1990s and worked with the American Red Cross and the State of California Lifeguard Program in San Clemente. He currently holds an MA in Social Science & an MBA in Hospitality and Tourism. He is a lecturer at the Faculty of International Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus.