



Water Safety

Summer is here and with it comes the fun of outdoor activities. When most of us are enjoying time at the pool or beach, injuries aren't the first thing on our minds. Yet, drownings are the leading cause of injury death for young children ages 1 to 4, and three children die every day as a result of drowning.

Whether swimming, boating, bathing, or simply spending time near water, it takes just a few seconds for an accident to happen, usually when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse of supervision. A child can drown in as little as one inch of water, and drowning is usually quick and silent. They will lose consciousness two minutes after submersion, with irreversible brain damage occurring within four to six minutes.



Fortunately, drownings and near drownings are preventable. Taking the following actions can help save a life:

- Make sure pools and spas are enclosed on all four sides with a fence at least 60 inches high with a self-closing and latching gates. Latches should be a minimum of 54 inches from the ground.
- Any door that provides direct access to the pool should have an exit alarm installed.
- Drains in pools and spas should have anti-entrapment drain covers.
- Learn infant and child CPR and always have a phone near the pool for emergency use.
- Children should always swim under the supervision of a grown-up. Adults watching kids near water should avoid distracting activities like playing cards, reading books, or talking on the phone.



- Every child over the age of three should have swimming lessons.
- Children using air-filled swimming aids should always be supervised by an adult within arm's reach.
- A U.S. Coast guard approved lifejacket should be worn for water sports such as tubing, skiing or jet skiing. Air-filled aids such as inner tubes, water wings and inflatable rafts are not substitutes for approved lifejackets
- Teach children to obey the posted rules.

Following these simple guidelines can help everyone have a fun and safe time under the sun this summer.

For more information on water safety, including building code requirements for residential pools, please visit our website at www.rsf-fire.org.

Sources: National Fire Protection Association, www.safekids.org, and Centers for Disease Control