

Family Safety and Legal Tips

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www.helpkeepkidssafe.org



Parent's Guide to Water Safety

Make Safety Your First Priority Near Pools, Lakes and Beaches!

Pools, lakes, beaches and water-parks are a fun way to stay cool when temperatures rise. But with the fun also comes increased risk of accidents. According to the National Injury Prevention Center, more than 1,000 children ages 14 and younger drown each year - and children ages 4 and under represent almost 60 percent of these deaths. Following these important safeguards can help parents and caregivers protect their loved ones from water-related injuries and possibly even save a life.

Drownings *can* be prevented, and you can play a key role in protecting the children you love by following these basic safety tips:

#1: Designate a Responsible Adult

- Designate a responsible adult to watch children while swimming or playing in or around water.
- Supervisors of preschool children (under age 6) should provide "touch supervision", that is, they should be close enough to reach the child at all times.
- Adults should not be involved in any other distracting activity (such as reading, playing cards, talking on the phone, or mowing the lawn) while supervising children.
- Never leave a child alone "just for a second". A "second" can easily turn into a minute, or two or three, and that is just too long to leave a child unattended in or near water.

#2: Check for Proper Safety Equipment

- A fence can keep kids away from the area when you don't expect them to be in or around the water. Install a four-sided isolation fence, with self-closing and self-latching gates around your pool.

- Pool fences should be at least four feet tall. To be safe, they need to completely separate the house and play area from the pool. Latches should be out of children's reach.
- Automatic door locks and alarms can help keep a fenced pool area off-limits and alert you if a busy, active child gets out of the house.
- Keep a hooked rescue pole and a life-ring buoy with attached line nearby.
- Make sure a phone is immediately available incase a call to 911 is needed. Have the phone number and the address ready to give out to emergency personnel.
- Use Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices. Remember that inflatable or foam devices such as "water wings", "noodles", or inner-tubes are toys— *not* life preservers.



Stay Alert at All Times!
77% of pool injuries occur in less than 2 minutes.

#3: Learn CPR and Basic First Aid

- Every parent and caregiver should learn CPR and get recertified every two years. Being trained in CPR can make a big difference . If a child is drowning, even if you dial 911 immediately, it will take a few minutes for paramedics to arrive on the scene. Performing CPR can help a child stay alive with the best possible outcome.
- Local CPR and first aid courses are available through

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the American Red Cross (1-800-RED-CROSS), the American Heart Association (1-800-AHA-USA1), and hospitals and health organizations throughout the state.

#4: Use the Buddy System

Always swim with a buddy. Select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.

#5: Avoid Alcohol

Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating or water skiing. Do not drink alcohol while supervising children.

#6: Learn to Swim

Formal swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning. However, constant, careful supervision and barriers such as pool fencing are necessary even when children have completed swimming classes.



Never allow children to swim near pool drains, or let them enter a pool or spa that has a loose, broken or missing drain cover.

#7: Clear the Pool & Deck of Toys

Remove floats, balls and other toys from the pool and surrounding area immediately after use. The presence of these toys may encourage children to enter the pool area unsupervised or lean over the pool and potentially fall in.



Special Precautions While In and Around Natural Bodies of Water

- Know the local weather conditions and forecast before swimming or boating. Strong winds and thunderstorms with lightning strikes are dangerous.
- Use U.S. Coastguard-approved life jackets when boating, regardless of distance to be traveled, size of boat, or swimming ability of boaters. According to U.S. Coast Guard reports, most boating fatalities are caused by drowning with 90% of victims *not* wearing life jackets.
- Federal regulations require that youths wear life

jackets when underway, so be sure to know the specific requirements in your state. For example, Georgia law requires that all children under 10 years of age wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while on board any moving vessel, except when the child is in a fully enclosed cabin.

- Know the meaning of and obey warnings represented by colored beach flags. Different beaches may use different colors so be sure to check at your particular site. Commonly used series include: Double Red denoting that the beach is closed to the public; Single Red signaling a high hazard (e.g. strong surf or currents); Yellow signaling a medium hazard; Green denoting calm conditions (although caution is still necessary); Purple flown with either Red or Yellow signaling the presence of dangerous marine life.
- Watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip currents (e.g., water that is discolored and choppy, foamy, or filled with debris and moving in a channel away from the shore). If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to shore; once free of the current, swim toward the shore.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; Georgia Department of Natural Resources



In Case of a Water Emergency

*Yell for help.
Pull child out of water.
Call 911 immediately!
Begin CPR if you are trained.
Follow instructions from 911 dispatcher.*

These are just a few things you can do to protect your child in and around water. Please visit Montlick.com/FamilySafety or HelpKeepKidsSafe.org and click on "Family Safety and Legal Tips," to see our latest safety videos and downloadable materials, and to register for Free Safety Alerts.