

Home Pool Safety

From Water Safety Expert
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Safety Begins With You!

Many people have the luxury of a home pool to help beat the summer heat. As prices continue to fall, many more pools are entering the market, including "inflatable" pools which allow almost anyone on any budget to have a pool in their back yard!

But these pools, whether above ground or in-ground models, come with ever-present dangers. If a child falls in undetected, that child's life could be over in seconds.

Parents and homeowners must be aggressive in managing their backyard pool and protecting children, including their own, from its dangers.

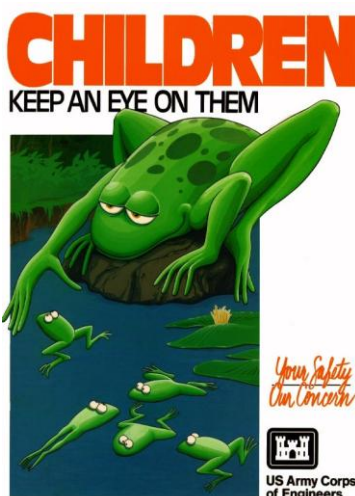
Imagine this scenario: You're in the kitchen preparing dinner. Your three-year-old child is playing in the living room, perhaps watching TV. After unloading the top rack of the dishwasher, you notice a lack of noise in the other room, even though the TV is on. You

call out your child's name but there's no response. You look into the living room and your child isn't there. You call out the child's name again and walk toward the child's room. This "search" takes less than two minutes.

According to medical experts, by now your child could be dead, having drowned silently underwater. If you find your child within the next minute and provided you know and start CPR promptly, your child may live although there could be lasting brain damage.

How did your child get out to the pool? Why didn't you hear any cries for help? Your child was in your supervision just a few feet away, but now your life is turned upside down with the reality that a moment's lapse in supervision has now led to a lifetime of remorse.

Don't let this happen to your family. Be prepared; Safety Begins With You.



US Army Corps of Engineers water safety education campaign.

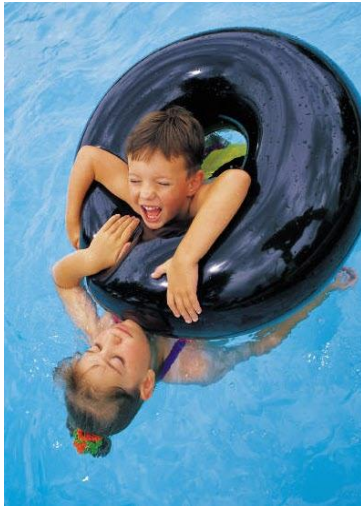
Barriers of Protection ~ The More the Merrier!

All leading safety organizations recommend multiple layers or barriers of protection. Working together, these function as obstacles for a child to overcome blocking access to the pool or alerting you to an "unauthorized entry."

- Perimeter fencing will help keep your neighbor's kids out of your pool.
- Isolation fencing (fences that surround the pool) help keep your children away from the water's edge.
- Place door and window locks high and out of reach of young children. Some models even sound an audible alarm when the door is opened.

- Install motion detector lighting in your backyard. If someone goes in at night, the lights should go on.
- Pool alarms will sound when the surface of the water is disturbed, such as by a child falling in.
- Self-closing, self-latching gates will also help keep unwanted visitors away from the pool.
- Remove ladders, steps or large climbable toys or chairs from the vicinity of your above-ground pool. A child can easily climb up and fall in.

Learn more at www.cpsc.gov



Never allow flotation devices to replace close, careful adult supervision. Remember, if it can inflate it can deflate. Instead, consider U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejackets for all weak swimmers. Type III lifejackets are comfortable to wear and will help keep a child afloat.

Pool Parties ~ You Must Be the Lifeguard

Kids, young and old, like nothing more than to have a pool party in the summer. Follow these tips to help make your pool party a safe and fun time for all:

- You'll be so busy running your party that you won't be able to watch the pool yourself. Instead, designate a responsible adult to be the "lifeguard on duty." This adult should not be distracted from friends while "on surveillance." Rotate the role among adults every 15 minutes.
- Avoid head, neck and back injuries: Never allow diving into a backyard pool, particularly by adults.
- Require all non-swimmers to wear an appropriately sized lifejacket. Print this on party invitations so that everyone knows the expectation before coming to the party.
- Never allow competitive, repetitive breath holding contests at your pool. This leads to shallow water blackout and could result in a death at your pool.
- Learn CPR and First Aid so that if something goes wrong, you will know what to do.
- Nothing replaces close, careful supervision of the pool.

"Must Have" Safety Equipment

Every home pool should have basic safety equipment on hand to help during an emergency. It can be very dangerous to jump into the water to make a rescue. Even a young child can quickly incapacitate an adult with weak swimming skills. Instead, reach or throw something to those in need.

- Keep a ring buoy within view of the pool. This can be thrown to a distressed swimmer.
- A pool skimmer net can be used as a reaching pole if needed.
- A fully charged phone should be poolside whenever the pool is in use. Pre-program emergency numbers (9-1-1) into the phone or post them nearby.
- CPR posters can be purchased at many pool retailers or through your local Red Cross.
- Even strong swimmers can suffer from unexpected emergencies such as seizures or debilitating muscle cramps. Your eyes are the best safety device available – keep them focused on the pool.



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Water Safety Research Online

The internet presents a wealth of water safety information for parents. Although safety around the water is considered "common sense" to most, unfortunately many lives are lost each year because parents fail to appreciate the dangers that come along with water recreation. read through the water safety information available at:

- <http://www.poolsafety.gov/>
- <http://www.usa.safekids.org/water/>
- <http://www.usa.safekids.org/NSKW.cfm>
- <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html>
- <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/359.pdf>