

# Water Safety Tips

From Water Safety Expert  
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## Safety Starts at Home

### Drowning is a *silent killer!*

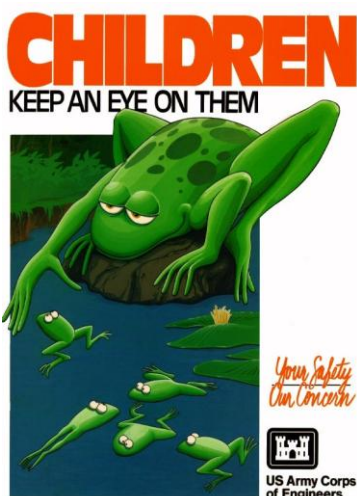
Each year over 900 children under the age of 14 drown in the United States. Of these accidental deaths, over 85% occurred when there was some form of adult supervision. Among accidental deaths of children under 4 years of age, most didn't intend on being in the water to begin with! The message is clear;

***Parents, Please Actively Supervise Your Children Whenever They Are Around the Water!***

Parents must avoid behaviors which distract them from carefully watching their children and put children at risk. Parents, when supervising children at the pool, your undistracted attention is needed. Please avoid reading, talking with others, preparing food or talking on the phone. It only takes seconds for a child to drown - a moment's dereliction can lead to a lifetime of remorse. Your children should be your sole focus.

### Safety Tips for Your Home Pool

- Adults must always be present whenever children are in the pool
- Designate a responsible adult to act as the "Lifeguard on Duty." Station the adult at water's edge. Rotate among adults every 20 minutes.
- Isolate the pool from the rest of the yard with special "isolation fencing."
- Use self-closing and self-latching gates on all pool fencing and never prop a gate open.
- Pool alarms, safety covers, and door and window locks offer additional barriers of protection.
- Enroll all children in swimming lessons. Swimming is an important life skill.
- Learn CPR and first aid.



US Army Corps of Engineers water safety education campaign.

## Lakes, Ponds and Rivers

Natural bodies of water are an ever-present danger to our children. Among drowning deaths of children aged 5-14 years, over 50% occurred in open-water areas such as lakes, rivers and ponds. Unlike drowning deaths of children under 4 years, most children in the 5-14 year group intended on being in the water at the time of their deaths. Common activities were swimming, boating, and other recreational activities.

Help keep your children from drowning at lakes, ponds and rivers.

- Swim at clean and well-maintained designated swimming areas with lifeguards present.

- Parents, inspect the water before your child goes in. Swim only in areas free from underwater hazards, such as reeds, rocks and sudden drop-offs.
- All non-swimmers should wear an appropriately sized and fitted lifejacket. Do not rely on inflatable devices or rafts – these may deflate, fall off or blow away!
- Avoid any headfirst entries into the water. At open water areas the safest entry is a feet-first entry.
- *Constant supervision is needed.*



Swimming **goggles** are safe for children. Face masks can accidentally slip and cover a young child's mouth and nose, presenting serious safety risks. Face masks should only be used by properly trained individuals.

## Safety at Public Pools and Waterparks

Every year children drown at pools and waterparks with lifeguards present. Lifeguards cannot see every person every moment of the day. They need your help. No one can watch your child as carefully as you can!

- Every child should learn to swim.
- Choose pools where lifeguards remain very attentive, enforce pool rules and are safety-oriented.
- Supervise your children. If with a group of friends, designate a responsible adult to watch the kids and rotate this job among adults.
- Children who cannot swim well should remain in shallow water within arm's reach of a parent.
- Non-swimmers should wear U.S. Coast Guard approved lifejackets.
- Dive only in deep water – water that is at least 9 feet deep.
- Sleeping on lounge chairs, reading books and talking to friends can have deadly consequences. Please stay with your child, at all times providing close, active supervision.
- Always follow posted safety rules, particularly for slides and attractions.

## Safety at the Ocean

The ocean is a powerful force which many often underestimate, particularly visitors from inland areas. Always remember that the ocean can be deadly and often deceiving. Even quiet areas on a beach with surf could pose major risks. Keep these safety tips in mind:

- Always select a beach with lifeguard services and ask the lifeguard about conditions before you go swimming.
- Pay attention to all advisory flags
- flown at the beach and be sure to know what each color means. Many beaches post this information online – it's best to check beach conditions before you go!
- Stay in waist-deep water. Swimmers do not need to venture out past their chests.
- If caught in a rip current, relax. Stay afloat. Signal for help. When free of the rip, swim diagonally to shore. Don't fight the rip – you'll lose.



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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. If you value your child's life, please take the time to read through the water safety information available at:

- <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/210.pdf>