



## PREVENTING CHILDHOOD DROWNING

**Always actively supervise children in and around water. Don't leave, even for a moment.**

- Stay where you can see, hear and reach kids in water. Avoid talking on the phone, preparing a meal, reading and other distractions.
- Children should swim only in designated and supervised swimming areas.
- Teach children never to swim alone.

**Use barriers to keep kids away from water when you're not around.**

- Four-sided isolation fencing, at least five feet high and equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates, should be installed around all pools (including inflatable pools) and spas. Fencing should completely enclose the pool or spa and prevent direct access from a house or yard.
- Install barriers of protection around your home pool or spa in addition to the fencing, such as pool alarms, pool covers, door alarms or locks.
- Never prop open the gate to a pool barrier. Don't leave toys that could attract children in or around a pool.
- Empty buckets, wading pools and other containers immediately after use, and store upside down and out of reach.
- Keep toilet lids down and locked and doors to bathrooms and utility rooms closed when not in use.

**Pool drains are an often-overlooked drowning hazard.**

- Teach children never to go near a pool drain, with or without a cover, and to pin up long hair when in water.
- Install multiple drains in all pools, spas, whirlpools and hot tubs. This minimizes the suction of any one drain, reducing risk of death or injury.
- Regularly check to make sure drain covers are secure and have no cracks. Replace flat drain covers with dome-shaped ones.

- Know where the manual cut-off switch for the pump is in case of emergency. Consider installing an approved safety vacuum release system! (SVRS), a tool that quickly and automatically turns off the pump (and stops the suction) when something is trapped in or blocks the drain.

**Use life jackets and other safety gear, but know that any child can get in trouble in the water, even if he is wearing a life jacket or has taken swimming lessons.**

- Always wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices while on boats, in or near open bodies of water or participating in water sports. A PFD should fit snugly and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through the neck opening.
- Air-filled swimming aids, such as water wings! and inner tubes, are not safety devices and should never be substituted for PFDs.
- Learn CPR and keep rescue equipment (like a lifesaving ring), a telephone and emergency phone numbers poolside.

**Everyone should know the water safety rules.**

- Make sure children take swimming lessons when they're ready, usually after age 4. Check with the local department of parks and recreation or Red Cross chapter to find a certified instructor, and look for classes that include emergency water survival techniques training.
- Forty-four states have laws that require children to wear PFDs while participating in recreational boating. The U.S. Coast Guard has also issued a rule requiring children under 13 to wear PFDs on board recreational vessels on Coast Guard waters. The rule applies to states without PFD laws. Recreational boats must carry one properly sized, U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD, accessible and in good condition, for each person onboard.
- Teach kids the safe way to help someone in trouble in the water: call for help and throw the person something that floats.
- Don't let children dive into water less than nine feet deep, and no one should dive into a river, lake or ocean.
- Children ages 16 and under should never operate personal watercraft.