



LIFE SAVER

Survival Swim School

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY GUIDE



HOW TO MAKE YOUR SWIMMING POOL SAFER FOR KIDS

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Using this guide as an introduction, it is our hope that you will educate yourself as much as possible and implement many of the safety measures that we discuss.

Intro

Let's face the facts. Pools are fun but pools are very dangerous places, especially for children and toddlers. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning ranks 5th among the leading causes of unintentional injury death in the United States.

Below are some facts about drowning.

Children Drowning Facts

- Child drowning can take place in just a matter of a few seconds.
- Nearly 800 children drown every year.
- Children ages 1 - 4 have the highest drowning rates.
- Among children ages 1 - 4, most drownings occur in home swimming pools.
- 75% of drowning incidents occur during summer months.
- Drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning.

5 Misconceptions & Facts About Water Safety

Water safety myths give parents a false sense of security, thus putting children at risk when in or around bodies of water. Here are 5 misconceptions about child swim safety and relevant facts every parent should know.

Misconception 1: If a child is drowning, he/she can easily be heard.

Fact: In real life, drowning is silent. There is little screaming and splashing, making it almost impossible to notice.

Misconception 2: A child can be left alone in or around a swimming pool or body of water.

Fact: In reality, once a child starts to struggle, he/she can drown in a matter of few seconds.

Misconception 3: It is fine to leave a child swimming in a pool since a lifeguard is actively supervising.

Fact: It is the parents' responsibility to supervise their children while in the water. The primary responsibility of a Lifeguard is to ensure pool rules are being followed and to provide quick emergency response and rescue.

Misconception 4: A child had swimming lessons, and so there's a lesser chance of drowning.

Fact: Swimming is a good skill to learn, however, the level of proficiency is different for every child, and so it is not an assurance that a child would be safe to swim alone. In fact, 47% of those who drowned in swimming pools knew how to swim.

Misconception 5: Once a child knows how to swim, he/she doesn't need a life vest.

Fact: Water conditions change. When the water becomes cold and swift, the drowning risk increases. Wearing a life jacket improves the chance of survival.

Factors Influencing Drowning Risk

- *Lack of Swimming Ability*
- *Lack of Pool Safety Barriers*
- *Lack of Adult Supervision*
- *Location*
- *Failure to Wear Life Jackets*
- *Seizure Disorders*

How Do You Know If Someone Is Drowning?

It is important to understand that drowning is not like what we see in movies. Drowning doesn't look like drowning. The "tell-tale" signs can be very subtle, if you do not know what you are looking for. In fact, there is almost no splashing or screaming for help; it's not what

we expect most of the time. As cited by Coast Guard's On Scene magazine, here are some signs that will assist in determining if a person is drowning:

- A drowning person's head is tilted back, the mouth is not above the surface of the water, and alternately sinks, making it hard to breathe.
- Since there is difficulty of breathing, it's almost impossible to call and wave for help.
- A drowning person finds it hard to swim in a particular direction since he or she will not be able to control any arm movements.
- Usually, the body will be in an upright position and the drowning person will find it hard to use his or her legs and "appears to be climbing an invisible ladder."
- A drowning person has only 20 to 60 seconds of struggle and for someone to notice before the body will submerge.

Is Supervisions Enough To Help Improve Pool Safety for Kids? It's Critical. But It's One Component To Your Total Safety Plan.

When planning a pool party for our children, we tend to put more focus on the fun and games of the party. Any successful event is an event without accident or injury. **Pool safety should be our first priority** when owning a pool or when planning a swimming pool themed event for our children. Our guests will feel more at ease and more comfortable when we have instituted layers of protection. We need to come as close as possible to a fail-safe system of preventing drowning and near drowning incidents.

Remember, there is no compromise when it comes to pool safety. We are dealing with a life and death situation.

Supervision is our first and most important layer in our rules. #1: Be at the pool and stay close by keeping children in sight at all times. When having a party or just managing the household day to day, share the responsibility with other parents and adults. Get a whistle and put the whistle in the hand of the adult in charge of supervising for that time period. Use a timer to help take shifts with your Spouse or another adult. Pick a time frame where you know the Adult will be 110% focused on pool safety. What the whistle does more than anything else, is it becomes a reminder for the entire time period that you are the Life Guard, it's your job, you cannot be focused on anything else whatsoever at all. It also gives everyone a chance to have fun knowing that there is someone doing nothing else other than supervising the activities in and around the pool. Your family and guests must understand that for that time period, the person supervising cannot be distracted.

Sometimes the pool can get a bit crowded. You may have older kids jumping in the pool and creating waves. If there are younger ones in floats, chairs or other toys could cause

them to take on the water. Just like a blow-up bouncer for a party, we never let older kids and toddlers in the bouncy at the same time. Why? Because we don't want our little kids to get hurt. It is the same idea when it comes to a pool but 1 million times worse. We need to keep horseplay to a minimum and to separate the pool time for older kids and toddlers. This is all part of your role as Supervisor!

When you have a pool party, wouldn't it be wise to have life vests for at least your young guests on hand?

Swimming pools are a leading cause of child drownings and yet many of us never think about what we could do to make our pools safer. You would never leave a loaded gun on a coffee table in your house, especially with children around. Then why would we have an unprotected swimming pool around our kids? The outcome of both is the same and there really is no difference. It's just a matter of time until that gun goes off.

Life Saver's Top Pool Safety Tips To Help Prevent Drowning

A child can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone call. Never leave children unattended, not even for a minute. Child drowning is a silent death. There are no splashing or sounds to alert someone that a child is struggling. Additionally, there have been reports about kids being involved in pool accidents that resulted in grave injuries.

We want to reemphasize that there is no substitute for active adult supervision. Never allow any child to swim alone. It is very important to actively supervise your children whenever they are in and around your swimming pool. This means that your kids, especially if you have infants or toddlers, should be within arm's reach. If there are several children swimming, designate someone to supervise for a certain amount of time to prevent gaps in supervision. Having someone who knows CPR is also important and will give you peace of mind. It's a skill that will save anyone's life.

In addition to Supervisions, it is important (as much as it sounds obvious) to make sure your children can swim. Teaching them how to swim with an instructor is essential. It is also critical to make sure that children stay away from drains and that you have a proper drain cover installed.

It is important to educate your kids about swimming safety, especially if it's their first time to swim in the pool. You can enroll your children in swimming classes if you think they are ready. It is important to teach your children with the basics like how to float, tread water, and stay by the edge. You also have to make sure they only swim in designated areas. They need to be aware of how deep the water is and for uneven surfaces. If it's their first time, teach them to never go in the pool unless you are present.

For kids who are inexperienced swimmers, have them wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. For any circumstance, never allow your child who doesn't know how to swim, into the pool without wearing a life vest.

Ensure there is at least one person who knows how to respond to emergencies especially someone who knows how to perform CPR. It is highly recommended to take water safety and first aid courses.

Take extra steps by securing your swimming pool with quality barriers(see our below list for a general idea of products used in homes like yours). Having barriers surrounding the swimming pool can block access to smaller kids and can essentially prevent any accidents. Quality barriers will be your first line of defense. They may make the difference between life and death.

As parents, we need to take responsibility and become accountable for safety. Taking proactive measures as a parent to keep your pool safe can be the difference between life and death.

While there is no substitute for proper supervision, pool safety products are a critical component to keeping children and even family animals away from the pool.

Swimming Pool Safety Products

Below are the necessary barrier requirements for residential swimming pools. As always, we advise that you call a professional to determine your exact needs and specifications. Each home is different. Below are general guidelines.

Pool Fences

Pool fences separate the swimming pool from the rest of your property without leaving any open areas. It is important to install fences that are tailored based on the safety needs.

The pool fences should completely surround the swimming pool and must be at least 4 feet tall. The space between the ground and the bottom of the fence should not go beyond 2 inches. Any opening should be small enough to obstruct passage of smaller children through the opening.

(Please Note: We are often asked who do we recommend for selling and installing the best home pool fence systems. The Life Saver Swim School highly recommends [Life Saver Of Texas](#) ... check them out if your home needs a safe pool fence system!)

Pool Gates

Swimming pool gates must satisfy the requirements applicable to pool fences. You must install pool gates that are self-closing, self-latching and key-lockable. The latch handle should be at least 54 inches above grade and is located within the enclosure.

Also, it must open outward. A self-closing gate will give you peace of mind at times when your child goes out of sight.

Pool Alarms

Any door that can provide direct access to the swimming pool should be equipped with a pool alarm. The alarm should produce an audible warning when the door or the pool gate is opened and should sound for at least 30 seconds after the door is opened. Also, make sure that the alarm can be heard throughout the house. You should be able to deactivate the alarm manually temporarily or choose one that resets under all conditions.

Pool Safety Cover

If there are no barriers installed, the swimming pool should be equipped with a powered pool safety cover that conforms to the standard labeling requirements for covers of all kinds of swimming pools. Use a pool cover that can hold substantial weight. It is also important to remove any ladder or steps that can be used to access the pool.

Pool safety is all about planning and getting as close as possible to that fail safe system. It is year round not just for the summer season. Have as many layers of protection as possible when you own a pool. Have a definitive set of pool rules, where there is no leeway only your way. Be a dictator when it comes to those rules. Lives depend on it.

Remember, when it comes to safety, there is no room for error. Take the first step and be proactive about how your approach safety in your home.

Still Have Questions? Want To Learn More? Getting In Touch With Us Is Easy.

We look forward to hearing from you whether you have a question, would like someone from our team to evaluate your pool's safety, or if you have a specific need this time of year that we can help fulfill.

Contact Life Saver Today For Your FREE Safety Evaluation

Give us a call at (832) 366-3008 and talk to a professional. We consider it a privilege to speak with you.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>

Pool Safety

<https://www.poolsafely.gov/parents/safety-tips/>

Life Saver Of Houston

<http://www.bestpoolfencehouston.com/swimming-pool-safety/>

Secure Your Swimming Pool. Keep Your Family Safe.

Call Us for More Information

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