

Water Safety Tips

These are general water safety tips whenever swimming or enjoying any body of water (pools, lakes, ponds, quarries, rivers or oceans and beaches)

Never swim alone.

Read and obey all rules and posted signs.

If you see someone in danger, reach or throw a floatable object, don't try to swim and rescue them unless you are a certified lifeguard.

Swim in areas that are supervised by lifeguards.

Take extra precautions such as wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.

Be mindful of the "dangerous too's" - too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

Set water safety rules for your family (for example, never enter the water without approval from your parents).

Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and where the entry and exit points are located.

Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies (Error on the side of safety).

Never dive, use a feet first entry when entering the water.

Do not mix alcohol with swimming or boating. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination, affects your swimming and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.

Pools should be enclosed completely with a fence with vertical bars to prevent scaling (climbing) that has a self-latching gate. Openings in the fence should be no more than 4 inches wide. The house should not be part of the barrier. If the house is a part of the barrier, additional fencing should be installed and the doors locked and protected with an alarm that produces sound if unrepentantly opened.

Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. A reaching pole, rope and floatation devices, such as ring buoys, rescue tubes and life jackets, are recommended. A well-stocked first aid kit should also be available. Store the safety gear in a consistent, easily accessed location. A "safety post" may be used.

Post all emergency phone numbers.

Watching Children Around Water

Watch children around any body of water (such as bathtubs, pools, beaches, rivers, lakes, toilets, and buckets of water), no matter the how well your child can swim and how shallow the water.

Stay within an arm's reach while your child is in the water.

Do not rely on substitutes. The use of flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision or lifeguards. Such devices could suddenly shift position, lose air or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.

Prevent access to water features, such as small ponds and waterfalls.

Empty portable pools immediately after use. Do not leave water in an unattended portable pool.

Use safety locks on toilets and keep bathroom doors closed and toilet bowl covers down if there are small children in the home.

Empty cleaning buckets immediately after use.

Enroll children in a Red Cross Learn-to-swim course. Not only will they learn some swimming skills, they will also learn water safety tips.