



Rappahannock Area Health District News Release

109 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219 • www.vdh.virginia.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2025

Media Contact: Erin Perkins, erin.perkins@vdh.virginia.gov

Rappahannock Area Health District Offers Tips to Make Residential Pools Safe, Prevent Drownings

World Drowning Prevention Day is July 25

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. – As [World Drowning Prevention Day](#) approaches, the Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) reminds families that residential pools are the leading location for accidental pool drownings in children under 15 and encourages homeowners to ensure that their pools have proper safety features in place to help reduce the risk of drowning or injury.

According to [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#), 70% of pool or spa drownings in children under 15 happen at home. That number grows to 85% for children 0-5 years old.

In Virginia, nine children under age five accidentally drowned in pools in 2025, an increase from the last five years (three in 2024, two in 2023, four in 2022, eight in 2021 and four in 2020).

RAHD Health Director Dr. Olugbenga Obasanjo said “While it is important to relax and recharge, we must stay alert during high-risk activities like swimming. This is especially important when watching young children or others who may not see danger or keep themselves safe.”

RAHD offers the [following tips](#) to increase the safety of your residential pool:

- Install or maintain a fence at least four feet tall around the entire pool/spa.
- Use a self-closing and self-latching gate.
- Use anti-entrapment drain covers. Encourage swimmers to stay away from drains and other pool openings.
- Always remove portable pool ladders when not in use and when adults are not present.
- Remove all toys from the pool area that might attract children to the pool when not in use with adult supervision.
- Install alarms on doors leading from the house to the pool area that will alert you when someone enters the pool area.
- Empty and put away smaller portable pools after every use. Cover larger portable pools.
- Make sure your neighbors, babysitters and visitors know about the pool’s presence in your yard.

Drowning is the [leading cause of death among children](#) ages one to four. Drownings happen [quickly and silently](#). In Virginia, on average, one person drowns every four days.

RAHD reminds families to:

- Always watch kids in and around the water – and designate a [water watcher](#).
- Teach children how to [swim](#) – or sign them up for swim classes.
- Know life-saving skills, including [CPR](#) for adults and children.

Visit [swimhealthyva.com](#) for more information. Swim safe. Stay safe!

#