



Drowning Prevention



Most drownings involving young children occur in residential settings. Children under the age of five years do not struggle in the water. They can drown without making a sound.

TIPS

- ✓ Never leave a child unsupervised in a bathtub, even for a second. Most siblings are not old enough to properly supervise a young child in this situation.
- ✓ Never leave a child alone near a pool/spa, bathtub, toilet, water-filled bucket, pond, or any standing body of water.
- ✓ An unclimbable, five-foot fence should separate the pool/spa from the residence. Fence openings should be no more than four inches wide so children cannot squeeze through the spaces.
- ✓ The fence gate should be self-closing and self-latching with latches above a child’s reach.
- ✓ Never rely on flotation devices or swimming lessons to protect a child.
- ✓ Don’t allow children to play in the pool/spa area. Never keep toys around or in a pool.
- ✓ Avoid swimming after dark.
- ✓ Risk for drowning increases in muddy water of lakes, ponds, and rivers.
- ✓ Avoid weak or thawing ice on any body of water.
- ✓ Diving into shallow water can cause spinal injuries. Never allow diving in above-ground pools, shallow water, or unknown areas.
- ✓ Be aware of local weather conditions prior to engaging in recreational water activities.
- ✓ Use the buddy system when swimming or boating.
- ✓ Require all persons to wear Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices when involved in water-related recreational activities, regardless of swimming ability.
- ✓ Avoid using alcohol or other drugs prior to and during recreational water activities.
- ✓ Assign an adult to be a “Water Watcher” who is responsible for actively supervising children in and around water even if a lifeguard is present.

911 If you or someone you know is experiencing a life threatening injury or act of violence, please dial 911 immediately.

If you would like more information on injury and violence prevention education and information, call 1-800-732-8333 or email ivp@vdh.virginia.gov