



# Pool Safety Awareness

## Did You Know?

**1 in 5** people who die from drowning are children 14 years old or younger.

**Drowning** is the leading cause of accidental injury deaths among children ages 1 to 4 years old.

Among children ages 1 to 4 years, most drownings occur in residential swimming pools.

*\*Statistics according to CDC.gov*



## PUBLIC POOLS

We all know swimming is the best way to have fun and to stay cool during the summer's heat. Being safe while having fun should be your main priority for you and your loved ones. Here are some safety tips to help keep you and your children safe from harm and illness:

- Always keep a close eye on children, especially those under the age of 14 years old.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom and changing diapers before entering the water.
- Wash your child thoroughly, especially his or her bottom with soap and water before swimming.
- Have your child take bathroom breaks often.
- If you see fecal matter in water, please notify the life guard or operator of the facilities.



It is hard to see bacteria and germs with the naked eye, so it is very important to keep you and your children clean. Here are a few other safety tips on what not to do:

- **DO NOT** enter the water if you or your child has diarrhea or had it within the past 14 days.
- **DO NOT** swallow the water! Chlorine does not kill all the germs. Do not count on swim diapers or pants to keep fecal matter from leaking into the water. These are not leak proof!
- **DO NOT** change diapers near the pool since germs can contaminate surfaces and objects around the water.
- **DO NOT** swim in water that is cloudy or contains algae or where the main drain is not clearly visible from the pool deck.



## POOL SAFETY AT HOME

The same safety tips used for public pools should also be applied to swimming pools at home or any other residential pool. You should always supervise kids when in the pool and do not leave young children unattended near the pool. When supervising kids, give them your full attention. Please refrain from any distractions, such as playing games or texting on your cell phone. Stay within arm's reach of young children. Learn how to swim and teach your children how to swim as well as water safety tips and precautions. It also helps to know CPR in case of emergencies, both on children and adults. Make sure all gates are closed and locked to prevent young children from accessing the pool.



## PROPER EQUIPMENT

Having the right equipment will help keep you and your family safe and your pool clean. Install a five-foot or taller fence around the pool and spa with self-closing and self-latching gates to act as a barrier. Ensure pool drains and covers are in compliance with the Pool & Spa Safety Act, and that the drains are properly installed. You should have a life ring with a rope or safety hook nearby to help with rescues when necessary. Also, you should have a pool skimmer, a brush that attaches to a pole, and a pool vacuum to help keep the pool clean. Do not have the pool vacuum operating when children or adults are swimming to avoid suction entrapment. Chlorine is needed to keep your pool clean. A test kit is needed to ensure pool chemicals are at proper levels to keep the pool sanitized and clean. Make sure chemicals are used and stored properly and keep them out of reach of children.



## MAINTENANCE

Maintaining your pool is necessary to ensure that it is clean and safe to swim in. Use a testing kit to test the water's chlorine and pH levels every day. Here are some tips to help keep your pool maintained:

- pH should be between 7.2 – 7.8.
- Free available chlorine should be at 1.0 – 4.0 ppm (mg/L)
- When testing chlorine and pH levels, collect a sample of the pool water at least elbow deep below the surface.
- Skim the pool's surface for plants, bugs and other debris at least twice a week.
- Keep the bottom of the pool clean with a handheld vacuum or automatic vacuum to remove accumulated dirt and debris.
- Clean out the skimmer daily to dispose of leaves, bugs, or hair that may get trapped in the skimmer basket.

If you don't have time to properly maintain your pool, hire a pool maintenance service.



# Pool Safety Equipment



These drain covers are approved by the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. These covers help prevent entrapments caused by the suction of the drains that could lead to drowning. This act was signed into law in 2007 after 7-year old Virginia Graeme Baker drowned in June 2002 due to suction entrapment caused by a faulty drain cover.

These devices are a body hook (top) and a life ring with a rope (bottom) which are used to save individuals who are drowning. These are necessary to have near the pool in case of accidents and help saves lives.

All public pools are required to have proper signage to display rules, safety precautions and capacity limits for pools and spas (right). There should be a sign displayed if no lifeguard is on duty. There should be rules and safety precautions about pregnant women, children, the elderly and those under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Emergency contact numbers and CPR instructions should be displayed in case of emergency along with safety equipment, such as a life hook and life ring. In case of emergency, there should be a sign posted on pool equipment to allow for emergency shut off for spas in case of entrapment. Diving should **NOT** be allowed in water less than six feet. Signage should be posted to prohibit individuals who have or had diarrhea in the past 14 days. All fences or gates that allow pool access should always be kept closed.





## SPAS/HOT TUBS

The same safety tips for residential and public pools apply to commercial and residential spas and hot tubs. The temperature of spas and hot tubs should not exceed 104°F. Do not enter a spa or hot tub if you have or had diarrhea within the last 14 days. As always, avoid swallowing water from a spa or hot tub. To avoid the spread of germs, make sure you shower or bathe with soap before entering a spa or hot tub. Always look for signs that indicate the maximum number of allowable bathers and do not exceed these limits for safety reasons. It is recommended that children under the ages of 5 years old should not use spas or hot tubs. Do not leave children unattended in a spa or hot tub. If pregnant, you should consult a physician before using the spa or hot tub. Avoid drinking alcohol before entering or during hot tub use.



## WAYS TO PREVENT DROWNING:

- Never leave children unattended near or in pools or water.
- Install a barrier, such as a four-sided fence or gate that can surround the pool and spa.
- Install and use a lockable safety cover on your spa.
- Keep children away from pool drains, pipes, and other openings to avoid entrapment.
- Learn and teach children how to swim. Formal swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning.
- Learn how to perform CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation).

## INFLATABLE AND PLASTIC POOLS (KIDDIE POOLS)

Small inflatable or plastic pools that are small enough for young children are usually referred to as “kiddie pools”. These could also be plastic or inflatable small water slides. Children should be given a bath or shower with warm soap before swimming in these pools. Do **NOT** let children drink or swallow the water. Just like pools, children should **NOT** bathe in a kiddie pool if they have or had diarrhea in the past 14 days. If there are feces in the pool or if a child has a soiled diaper, you must clear the pool, drain it, and clean it. If there was diarrhea, then allow the pool to completely dry in the sun for four hours after it has been cleaned. Normal care for the pool is to follow instructions and guidelines for proper use. After children are done playing in the pool, drain it, clean it, dry it, and leave it in the sun for four hours before putting it away.

