

Pool and Water Safety

As summer heats up, families are spending more time outside—and in swimming pools. From 2005 to 2007, there were approximately 300 fatal drownings per year for children under the age of five.

According to a 2008 press release from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, drowning is now the #1 cause of accidental child death.

To help prevent water-related injuries and drowning:

- Never leave children in or around water unsupervised—not even for a moment.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Enroll your child/children in swimming lessons.
- Do not use air-filled or foam toys, such as water wings, noodles, or inner-tubes, in place of life jackets (personal flotation devices). These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.
- Remove floats, balls, and other toys from the pool after use so children are not tempted to reach for them.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Select swimming sites that have lifeguards, whenever possible.

For home swimming pools:

- Contact your local municipality to ensure that you meet all relevant bylaws before installing and filling a pool.
- Use layers of protection: install a four-sided, six-foot pool fence with self-closing and self-latching gates, an entrapment prevention system or drain cover, a pool safety cover, and/or a pool alarm.
- After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they can't get back into it.
- Drain wading and kiddie pools when not in use and turn them upside down.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.

All swimming pools are subject to State Building Code requirements of 780 CMR, 6th edition, Chapter 4, Section 421. For swimming pool permit applications and/or questions about the installation of a swimming pool, contact your local building department.

For additional pool and spa safety information and to order publications, contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at (800) 638-2772/TTY: (800) 638-8270 or U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

For information about state codes relevant to swimming pools, contact the Executive Office of Health and Human Services at (617) 573-1600 or Executive Office of Health and Human Services.