

Drowning Prevention

Drowning and near drownings are a common preventable incident. Children aged five and under comprise the largest risk group. Responsible adults must pay special attention to any size or type of potential drowning hazard.

If there's more than half an inch of water, there's a drowning hazard.

Know what can lead to drowning. Many water collection sites and containers can pose a drowning risk to a child:

- Toilets, wash buckets, washing machines, sinks, and large dog dishes.
- Back yard pools, community pools, and hot tubs.
- Drainage canals, ditches, and wells.
- Puddles, rain barrels, bird baths, and fountains.
- Any outside container that could fill with rain water (wheelbarrow, buckets, etc.).

Safety proof water hazards in your environment. Parents/guardians should remove or secure water sources within their environment relative to their children's life stages.

- Most drownings in the home take place due to unattended children in bath tubs.
- Toilets may easily be locked shut with readily available latches, thus preventing a small child from tipping in head first.
- Close and lock laundry room doors. Prevent access to pools, hot tubs, or water storage containers by fencing and locking as per regulations in your area.

Create layers of protection. Place more than one barrier between a child and the hazard so that if one barrier fails (e.g., an unlocked pool gate), the next layers (e.g., an outward swinging gate, gate alarm, secure pool cover) will prevent an incident.

- Layers of protection often buy an adult time to rescue a child from an incident.
- Look around your home. Where could you remove hazards or add layers?
- The best layer of protection is YOU. Always supervise water activities by keeping children within your line of vision and within arm's reach. Use properly fitted life jackets or personal flotation devices.

Educate for prevention. Drowning is preventable and need not happen.

- Enrol your child in swim classes as soon as possible.
- Take first aid training. This is an important step in creating and maintaining a safe environment, as well as being able to respond effectively in an emergency.
- Make sure emergency numbers are entered into cell phones or posted by all stationary phones.

“Prevention Is the Key to Safety”

Child Safe Canada
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