

SAFETY TIP OF THE WEEK

ZERO HARM

Summer Dangers

Drowning Prevention

How large is the problem of unintentional drowning in the United States?

- In 2005, 3308 people drowned, including 964 children younger than 15 years old.

Most children drown in swimming pools. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), emergency departments reported that among children younger than 5 years old, about 320 fatal drownings and nearly 2,300 non-fatal near-drownings occurred in residential swimming pools. Between 60-90% of these occur at the child's own home. Backyard pools.

How can we guard against drowning?

We can greatly reduce the chances of you or your children becoming drowning or near-drowning victims by following a few simple safety tips:

- Whenever young children are swimming, playing, or bathing in water, make sure an adult is **constantly** watching them. By definition this means that the supervising adult should not read, play cards, talk on the phone, mow the lawn, or do any other distracting activity while watching children.
- Never swim alone or in unsupervised places. Teach children to always swim with a buddy.
- Keep small children away from buckets containing liquid: 5-gallon industrial containers are a particular danger. Be sure to empty buckets when household chores are done.
- Never drink alcohol during or just before swimming, boating, or water skiing. Never drink alcohol while supervising children. Teach teenagers about the danger of drinking alcohol and swimming, boating, or water skiing.
- To prevent choking, never chew gum or eat while swimming, diving, or playing in water.
- Learn to swim. Enroll yourself and/or your children aged 4 and older in swimming classes. Swimming classes are not recommended for children under age 4.
- Learn CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation). This is particularly important for pool owners and individuals who regularly participate in water recreation.
- **Do NOT use** air-filled swimming aids (such as "water wings") in place of life jackets or life preservers with children. These can give parents and children a false sense of security and increase the risk of drowning.
- Check the water depth before entering. The American Red Cross recommends 9 feet as a minimum depth for diving or jumping.
- Prevent children from having direct access to a swimming pool.
- When on vacation, most hotels do not have life guards posted. That would be you!