

Water Safety

Summer is here, and it is time for fun in the sun and relaxing in the water. Pools and lakes are a great way to cool off and to have a good time in the heat of the summer months, but there are important rules for safety in these places. Be aware of the following guidelines and precautions before hitting the water for a fun and enjoyable summer!

General Water Safety Tips

- Learn to swim, and never swim alone. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and ability.
- Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard.
- Read and obey all rules and posted signs.
- Children or inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device when around the water.
- Watch out for the dangerous “too’s” – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Set water safety rules for the whole family based on swimming abilities.
- Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and location of entry/exit points.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Enter headfirst only when the area is clearly marked for diving and has no obstructions.
- Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating.
- Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.

Beach Safety

- Protect your skin: wear a sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly but make the heat's effects worse.
- Watch for signs of heat stroke: Heat stroke is life-threatening. The person's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working..
- Wear eye protection
- Sunglasses are like sunscreen for your eyes and protect against damage that can occur from UV rays. Be sure to wear sunglasses with labels that indicate that they absorb at least 90 percent of UV sunlight.
- Wear foot protection. Many times, people's feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand.

Home Pools

- Never leave a child unobserved around water. Your eyes must be on the child at all times.
- Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so that you can call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- Learn Red Cross CPR and insist that babysitters, grandparents, and others who care for your child know CPR.
- Post CPR instructions and 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.
- Enclose the pool completely with a self-locking, self-closing fence with vertical bars. Openings in the fence should be no more than four inches wide. The house should not be included as a part of the barrier.
- The gate should be constructed so that it is self-latching and self-closing.
- Never leave furniture near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.
- Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it.
- Keep toys away from the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children into the pool.
- Pool covers should be completely removed prior to pool use.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom, and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area



Source: American Red Cross

