



Tempe Fire Department Safety Tip

Pool & Water Safety Tips

Too often we hear people say "I only left for a second..." Sadly, just a few seconds is all it takes for a child to drown.

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for children under the age of four in Arizona. Most children drown in their own pools, but children also drown in buckets, toilets, bathtubs, fish tanks, and ponds.

Near drowning is also very tragic and can cause permanent brain damage.

Drowning and near drowning can be prevented! Anyone involved with young children needs to be aware of how to prevent this tragedy.

Supervision

- **Never** leave your child unattended in or near a lake, swimming pool, hot tub, spa, bathtub, toilet, or bucket of water, not even for a second.
- Keep toys, tricycles, and other children's play things away from the pool or spa.
- Don't consider your children to be "drownproof" because they have taken swimming lessons.
- Don't allow barriers, such as fences or walls, give you a false sense of security regarding your child's safety. There is No substitute for adult supervision.

Barriers

- Make sure your pool or spa has an effective barrier, such as a fence, wall, or locked gate that helps to guard against unauthorized access.
- Gates should have self-closing, self-latching mechanisms. Latches need to be out of reach of young children.
- Your pool or spa should have a barrier regardless of whether they are covered.
- Always drain standing water off the cover of your pool or spa.

Emergency Procedures

- Learn how to administer CPR, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and other lifesaving techniques. To administer CPR correctly you must be properly trained.
- Know how to contact your local emergency medical services. Install a phone or keep a cordless phone in the pool or spa area. Post the emergency number in an easy to see place. In Tempe, call 9-1-1 for emergency help.

Bathrooms

- Children **must** be supervised while bathing. Leaving a child in charge of a younger sibling is **not** acceptable. Many tragedies occur when the child is left alone in the tub for "just a few seconds" while the telephone is being answered or while the parent or adult caretaker is getting a towel.
- The bathtub is not to be used as an unsupervised playground, but as a fun time to be shared with the parent or adult caretaker. It is very important to immediately empty the bathtub once the bath is finished.
- Children have also been known to drown in toilet bowls. A young toddler is inquisitive by nature and is drawn to any body of water, including the toilet bowl. Because of a toddler's head and body weight distribution, the child that reaches into the toilet and falls in head first may not have the strength to right himself and escape. Silently, the child drowns. Safety latches for toilet seats are recommended.

Buckets

- Always empty any bucket when it is not in use.
- Pay particular attention to children if you are using a five-gallon industrial bucket. These buckets are constructed of heavy, rigid plastic and pose a threat to young children. The large size and heavy construction of the bucket, as well as a child's center of gravity and underdeveloped coordination, prohibit a child from extricating himself after falling into the bucket.

Lakes, Canals, Ponds

- Always assign a "lifeguard" to watch children around these bodies of water, especially in a party situation. Children should be encouraged to identify safe play areas and recognize potentially unsafe play areas such as lakes, canals, and ponds.

If you find a child in any source of water...

- Yell for help and pull the child out of the water.
- Call 9-1-1, or your local emergency number immediately!
- Begin CPR if you are trained.
- If you are not trained to administer CPR, follow the instructions from the 9-1-1 operator until help arrives.

How to prevent drowning

- Use an approved barrier to separate the pool from the house.
- Never allow children to be alone near a pool or any water source. This includes bathtubs, buckets, toilets and ponds.
- Do not allow children to play in or around the pool area.
- Mount life saving devices near the pool.
- Keep tables, chairs and ladders away from pool fences. Check placement of doggie doors for direct access to pool area.
- Post your local emergency number on the phone. Think about installing a phone near the pool area.

Adult supervision is the best approach in the prevention of drowning.