



Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for infants and children under the age of five in California.

Young children are naturally attracted to water, and effective barriers such as fences, power safety covers, door alarm systems and door closing mechanisms can help detect and prevent unsupervised access to the pool or spa.

Parents and pool and spa owners are urged to use a “layered” approach to safety, combining several barriers to prevent drowning and near drowning. A well-maintained fence should enclose every pool/spa and be at least 5 feet high with a self-closing, self-latching gate; some cities and counties have passed ordinances that require these items. The pool should also have an alarm system, a power safety cover, and doors leading to the pool or spa should be equipped with alarms and should be self-closing and self-latching. Sliding doors should be self-closing and self-latching with automatic sliding door closers. Check the barriers on a regular basis to make sure that they are in good working order.

Most important, parents and caretakers of little ones must keep an eye on children at all times. Pool and spa owners should not develop a false sense of security because they have pool or spa barriers.

Take a minute to read over the Drowning Prevention Checklist. Have fun in your pool or spa and don't forget to check that the gate is latched behind you!



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DROWNING PREVENTION



**Checklist for
swimming pools
and spas**

Drowning Prevention Checklist

The Department of Boating and Waterways offers pool/spa owners the following checklist to help prevent child drownings.

Supervision

- Never leave a child alone near water, even for a second.
- Don't rely solely on barriers, such as fences and walls. There is no substitute for vigilant supervision and it must be combined with barriers!
- Keep toys, tricycles, and other children's playthings out of the water and away from the pool or spa. Move tables, chairs, planters and other potential climbing aids away from the fence.
- Clear vegetation and other obstacles away from the fence to assure a clear view of the pool/spa from the house.
- Don't consider your children to be "drown-proof" because you enrolled them in water-proofing (an infant training class) or swimming classes. A child who falls into water unexpectedly may panic and forget learned swimming skills.
- Don't rely on inflatable devices to keep your child afloat. These are not substitutes for adult supervision. All non-swimmers should wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets when they are near water.



- Look in the pool/spa area first if a child is missing!

Barriers

- Make sure your pool, spa or hot tub has a fence, wall or safety cover that guards against unsupervised access, particularly by young children.
- Install exit alarms on all house doors and windows leading to the pool/spa area.
- Make sure doors are self-closing, self-latching and are never propped open. Latches should be placed on the pool side, out of reach of young children and kept in proper working order.
- Make sure the safety cover is always closed when the pool or spa is not in use. Completely remove cover before children are allowed in the pool or spa.



- Always drain standing (surface) water from the pool or spa cover. Remember that even a couple inches of water can be hazardous, especially to young children.

Emergency Procedures

- Learn how to administer lifesaving techniques to children, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Keep reaching and throwing aids, such as poles and life preservers, on both sides of the pool.
- Install a phone, or keep a cordless phone, in the pool or spa area.
- Post the emergency medical services phone number (9-1-1) in an easy-to-see place near the pool or spa, and make sure that everyone knows the numbers and how to dial the numbers.