

POOL SAFETY

Swimming pools are fun and a great place to spend time with your family and friends, but with that fun comes responsibility. Be sure that good times are safe times. Establish rules and enforce them. Supervise your pool. Remember, pool safety is everyone's responsibility.

Good Reasons for Thinking Safety First

First-time users run the highest risk of injury. Before they enter the pool, inform them of the safety rules. Informed users are concerned about safety because serious injuries and even death can result from unsafe use of pools, pool equipment, and associated products. Here are some examples:

DROWNING

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death in children aged 1-14 in the United States, especially for children under five. Although the greatest percentage of drownings occur in natural aquatic settings, (e.g. oceans, lakes, quarries, etc.), drownings do occur in swimming pools. The water depth of any pool is sufficient for drowning to occur.

ENTRAPMENT

Never swim in a pool or use a spa or hot tub that has a broken or missing drain cover!

New, anti-entrapment drain covers (seen to the right) are available, and according to federal law, must be used in all commercial pools. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that residential pools also use approved anti-entrapment covers, along with additional protection for pools with single drains other than unblockable, such as:

- Properly spaced multiple outlets
- An unblockable outlet
- Safety vacuum release system
- Suction limiting vent line
- Automatic pump shut-off system
- Gravity drainage system

Replacement drain covers for residential pools must meet federal law.



PARALYSIS – Improper diving or sliding, alcohol consumption, horseplay, or roughhousing in and around swimming pools may lead to serious neck and spinal injuries including paralysis, in the form of quadriplegia or paraplegia. A number of these injuries occur yearly, with the overwhelming majority occurring in shallow water. A number of people who ignored these rules and chose to dive into shallow water are now paralyzed. The facts show that many of these were experienced divers. Don't let this happen to you. Inform family and guests who come to enjoy your pool of the safety rules you have established.



BURNS/FIRES – Chemicals needed for clean, sanitized water are potentially harmful when stored or used improperly. If mixed with other chemicals or elements, explosions and fire can occur. Read the label and follow manufacturers’ instructions. Always store chemicals where they cannot be reached by children.

ELECTRICAL SHOCK/ ELECTROCUTION – Water is an excellent conductor of electricity. Electrical shock or electrocution can occur in a pool if live electrical current flowing through appliances and devices (including current from a telephone) comes into contact with the water. Make sure all electrical appliances and devices are protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

(Alcohol + Water + Electricity = DANGER)

CUTS, CONTUSIONS, AND ABRASIONS – The pool environment, as well as associated products and equipment, can be a source of injury to users. Slipping and falling can result in cuts or scrapes or broken legs and arms. Horseplay, improper use of equipment or failure to follow manufacturers’ instructions or warnings can result in serious trauma and permanently disabling injuries.

You can help ensure that your family and guests are not victims of any of these unfortunate accidents.

BARRIERS

Barriers are not childproof, but they provide layers of protection for a child who strays from supervision. Barriers give parents additional time to locate a child before the unexpected becomes a reality. The “Layers of Protection” concept involves equipping the pool or spa area with several safety devices in order to delay unsupervised access or warn of a child’s or person’s presence. Such “layers” include: pool alarms, safety fencing, pool covers, and drain covers. A successful pool barrier prevents a child from getting OVER, UNDER, or THROUGH and keeps the child from gaining access to the pool. Barriers include a fence or wall, door alarms for the house, and a power safety cover over the pool. Barriers also may be used to protect children from accessing hot tubs and spas.

FENCES & GATES

Install a fence or other barrier, such as a wall, completely around the pool. If the house is part of the barrier, the doors leading from the house to the pool should be protected with an alarm or the pool should have a power safety cover. Alarm and cover details are below:

- The fence or other barrier should be at least 4 feet high. It should have no foot or handholds that could help a young child to climb it. This should be installed completely around the pool.
- The top of the pool barrier should be at least 48 inches above grade (measured on the pool barrier which faces away from the swimming pool).
- The maximum clearance at the bottom of the barrier should not exceed 4 inches above grade (measured on the side of the barrier facing away from the pool).
- Vertical fence slats should be less than 4 inches apart to prevent a child from squeezing through.
- If the fence is chain link, then no part of the diamond-shaped opening should be larger than 1-3/4 inches.
- Fence gates should be self-closing and self-latching. The gate should be well maintained to close and latch easily. The latch should be out of a child’s reach.



PROPER SIGNAGE

Warning signs may be obtained from and installed by your pool professional. It is important to permanently display safety rules with all of your guests prior to allowing them to enter your pool.



SWIMMING AT NIGHT

If swimming is permitted at night, ensure that the entire area is lit, including the pool itself. Proper lighting not only increases safety but will enable you to view the entire pool in case there is a person in distress.

RULES FOR POOLS

- Instruct babysitters about potential pool hazards to young children and about the use of protective devices, such as door alarms and latches. Emphasize the need for constant supervision.
- Always have a swim buddy.
- Never leave a child unsupervised near a pool. During social gatherings at or near a pool, appoint a "designated watcher" to protect young children from pool accidents. Adults may take turns being the "watcher." When adults become preoccupied, children are at risk.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the pool area.
- Do not allow a young child in the pool without an adult. Never assume that flotation devices will suffice—there is no substitute for constant adult supervision.
- Do not consider young children to be drown proof because they have had swimming lessons. Children must be watched closely while swimming.
- **Learn CPR** (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Babysitters and other caretakers, such as grandparents and older siblings, should also know CPR.
- Keep rescue equipment by the pool. Be sure a telephone is poolside with emergency numbers posted nearby.
- Remove toys from in and around the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children to the pool.
- Never prop open the gate to a pool barrier.



LEARN CPR You Can Do It!	St. Tammany Fire District 12 offers public CPR classes on the first Saturday of every month. Contact us at (985) 892-5161 for more information.
------------------------------------	--



Important Websites:

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Pool Safely
www.poolsafely.gov

Safe Kids Worldwide
www.safekids.org

The information provided within is intended to be used as guidelines and recommendations to promote life safety.



Prevention Bureau
ST. TAMMANY FIRE DISTRICT 12