

IPC Drowning Prevention Tips

Check Your Water Safety Knowledge

1. What age person is at greatest risk of drowning?
A. Infants B. Toddlers C. 14 D. 60+
2. When do most drownings occur?
A. Nights B. Work days C. Weekend days D. Vacations
3. A drowning is most likely to occur when:
A. Adult supervision of a child is not constant B. A person swam alone
C. A person is not wearing life jacket D. All of the above
4. Who is a child's best lifeguard?
A. A certified lifeguard B. Parents C. A swimming instructor
D. A certified babysitter
5. What is the *best* way to prevent drowning or submersion brain damage in children?
A. 4-sided pool fence B. Keep doors/windows to pool locked and alarmed
C. Constant adult supervision D. Use all these layers of protection together
6. Drowning incidents that involve children under the age of 5 usually happen when the child was last seen by an adult just _____ before the child was known to be missing.
A. 5 minutes B. 20 minutes C. 1 hour D. 3 hours
7. Who is safely supervising a child playing in water or swimming?
A. An adult in the water B. An adult with constant eye contact on a child
C. An adult cleaning waterline tile, floating or swimming laps
D. Several adults casually chatting within 5 feet of the water's edge
8. Silent drowning is frequently related to:
A. Poor judgment due to alcohol, drugs or hypothermia B. Age
C. A seizure or unconsciousness from any cause D. Any of the above

Answers: 1. B 2. C 3. D 4. B 5. D 6. A 7. B 8. D

Water safety has no one simple solution. Drowning prevention means creating **Layers of Protection** for children and adults. The following are Water Safety Tips shown to have effectiveness.

Use as many as you can all the time.

For Children in pool/spa

- Assign a designated water watcher every time a child is near or in the water, *especially* during “normal” family time and social gatherings
- Adult must maintain eye contact with child/children in a swimming pool, spa, or wading pool and **never** leave them alone, even for a second.
- Install locks, at least six feet high, well out of children’s reach, on all doors leading to pool, spa, decorative ponds or other bodies of water
- Install alarms on doors and windows leading to pool, spa, decorative ponds or other bodies of water
- Install four-sided fencing with self-closing, self-latching gate around pool or spa
- Keep safety equipment such as a throwable life ring (ring buoy) or shepherd’s hook poolside within reach of children
- Create water safety rules, and enforce them consistently, such as:
 - Never go near the water without an adult
 - Never swim alone regardless of how well you swim
 - Never get into the water to rescue someone
 - Get out of the water when you get cold
 - Never dive in murky water or depths less than 9 feet
 - No playing near the drains at the pool/spa bottom or sides
 - Always have a phone nearby with the pool/spa address written on it when in the water
 - Store toys outside of the fenced pool/spa area every time water play ends, even when only for a few minutes
 - **Double check** to be sure all doors and gates to the pool/spa area are closed, latched and locked before leaving with children
 - **Talk** to your children and their guests about how to stay safe around the water and what to do when they see an unsafe child or adult in the water
 - No glass, gum, or running on the deck
 - Adult and child pool/spa guests also follow water safety rules
- Teach children water safety skills and swimming skills
- Continue teaching children swimming skills until they can swim 50 yards on the surface of the water and tread water for a full minute
- Know where the pool/spa pump shut off switch is located and how to turn it off
- Dress children who don’t know how to swim in US Coast Guard approved life jackets whenever an adult is not working with them in the water
- Always check the pool first, when a child is missing. Seconds count!

- Call 911 when someone is drowning and remain calm

For Children around the home

- Keep toilet seat cover down and locked
- Never leave the room when children are in the bath tub
- Empty and over turn all buckets, aquariums, coolers, wading pools when not actively using them
- Keep bathroom and laundry room doors closed

For Adults

- Never swim alone regardless of how well you swim
- Learn to swim and know your swimming area before entering
- Learn safe water rescue techniques, such as a reaching and throwing assists
- Keep a phone near the water whenever anyone is in or near the water
- Label phone with pool address
- Learn CPR
- Read pool rules, enforce them consistently with your guests, and model them with your behavior
- Wear a USCG approved life jacket whenever boating or on a dock
- Stay away from drains in pool/spa bottoms and sides to avoid entrapment/entanglement
- Know where the pump shuts off and how to turn it off to free an entrapment victim

For Open Water

- Check weather postings for strong winds, currents and sea life dangers and follow the warning flags or signs
- Never swim alone
- Never leave the job of watching your children exclusively to the lifeguard
- Assign a designated water watcher every time a child is near or in the water, especially during "normal" family time and social gatherings
- Adult must maintain eye contact with child/children in water and **never** leave them alone, even for a second
- Learn how to swim
- Dress children who don't know how to swim in US Coast Guard approved life jackets whenever an adult is not working with them in the water
- Adults who don't know how to swim should wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket
- Never use inflatable floatation aids as safety devices
- Secure balanced footing before moving into surf
- Stay at least 10 feet away from the hull of boats when swimming to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
- Stay within marked swimming area

- Watch for dangerous sea life and when spotted, leave the water quickly with little splashing and encourage others around you to do the same
- Exit the water, the beach, and the area at the first sign of thunder or lightning
- Never swim while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- When caught in a rip current (a current pulling you under water or away from shore), swim with your feet kicking near the surface, in a direction following the shore until free of the current. Then swim to shore.
- Drainage canals and ditches are unsafe for swimming

For Boating

- Take a safe boating course
- Properly equip your boat with all appropriate safety equipment and know how to use it
- Learn how to safely operate your boat, to see around blind spots, to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning to self and passengers, and what to do in any emergency
- Always file a float plan (notify someone of your destination, departure and estimated return time), even when going to a familiar area for a short time
- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket, regardless of the distance to be traveled, size of boat, or swimming ability of boaters
- Children must wear a life jacket on the boat and dock
- Select the right life jacket for your boating activity
- Never leave the motor running while people are in the water or on the dive platform to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
- Never allow people in the water less than 10 feet from the hull of the boat where carbon monoxide concentration from the engine is greatest, especially in calm winds
- Never hold onto the dive platform or anything else less than 10 feet from the boat's hull while the boat is idling or moving at slow speeds
- Never drive a boat while/after consuming alcohol or drugs

For Submerged Vehicles

- Know how to swim
- Purchase a hammer or spring-loaded center punch device with seat belt knife to keep on key ring or car console
- If space allows, carry US Coast Guard approved life jacket with whistle & light
- Learn CPR and First Aid
- *Don't* Panic
- *Don't* Remove seat belts until vehicle hits water
- *Don't* try to open doors until interior of vehicle is filled with water and pressure equalizes
- *Don't* wait for rescuers, seconds count

- *Don't* try to rescue more passengers than you can carry in each attempt
- *Don't* try to swim ashore against current, debris or significant distance
- *Don't* try to rescue personal belongings

To Escape

- Upon recognition of decent, roll down windows
- If windows won't go down, grab hammer or center punch and seat belt knife
- Once vehicle hits water, gain orientation to water's surface—vehicles often dive engine first and turn upside down
- Unfasten or cut seat belt
- Unfasten or cut seat belts of passengers incapable of helping themselves
- Break *untinted* side or rear window with hammer, center punch or kick of heel; front and tinted windows are more difficult to break
- Grab PFD and swim out window, holding hands of passengers in the form of a human chain
- If in dark or deep water, swim toward light or relax and allow your body to float toward surface
- Swim to nearest stable structure protruding from water, such as a piling or bridge footing, unless shore is close enough to safely swim the distance
- Remain holding onto structure until rescue help arrives to prevent exhaustion and be easier to locate

For Cold-related illness:

A person can develop cold-related illness even when temperatures are not extreme. In Southwest Florida cold emergencies occur when air temperatures are as high as 74 and water temperatures as high as 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Occurrence depends on the victim's physical activity, the wind, humidity, general working or living conditions, age and state of health.

- Learn what water temperature is most comfortable for you
- If no thermometer is available, test the water by staying in no more than 5 minutes when the water temperature continues to feel cold while wading, swimming or floating
- Avoid swimming when the air temperature feels cool to you
- Use caution swimming when it is windy, since wind increases the risk of hypothermia especially in the elderly and small children.
- Never swim alone
- Get out of the water when shivering and a bluish color appears on the lips

For Indoor Pools

- Check weather for lightning and stay out of water and off deck during electrical storms
- Check water and air temperatures to insure against risk of cold related illness
- Check for airborne chloramines to avoid poisoning

- Never swim alone
- Maintain appropriate safety equipment on deck