

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire and Life Safety Tips

August 2009

Drowning Prevention / Swimming Pool Safety



Drowning Prevention Video

<http://www.poolsafety.gov/resources/videos.html>

There is an average of 10 unintentional drowning deaths each day in the United States. Most of these tend to occur on Saturdays and Sundays (40 percent) between the months of May and August (62 percent).

More than one in four fatal drownings involve children 14 and younger. It is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for this same age group. For every child who dies from drowning, another four receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries.

Nonfatal drownings can cause brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities including memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning (i.e., permanent vegetative state). As many as 20 percent of the near drowning survivors receive a severe and/or permanent neurological disability.

It happens silently and quickly. There is usually no splashing to alert anyone that a child is in trouble. It can happen in a matter of a few seconds when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse in supervision around open water, pools, toilets, bathtubs, spas and hot tubs.

Most children who drown in swimming pools were last seen in the home, had been missing from sight for less than five minutes and were in the care of one or both parents at the time of the drowning.

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

BOATING

It is estimated that 85 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a personal flotation device.



Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) when on a boat, near open bodies of water or when participating in water sports. Air-filled swimming aids, such as “water wings,” are not considered safety devices and are not substitutes for PFDs.

RESIDENTIAL POOLS AND OPEN WATER AREAS

Install a four-sided isolation fencing at least 6’ high with no foot holds. This could prevent 50 to 90 percent of childhood residential swimming pool drownings and near-drownings. 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.

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.

Keep rescue equipment and a telephone near the pool. Remove floats, balls and other toys from the pool and surrounding area immediately after use. The presence of these toys may encourage children to enter the pool area or lean over the pool and potentially fall in.

Never leave a child unsupervised in or around a swimming pool, spa or open water area – even for a moment. Never rely on a PFD or swimming lessons to protect a child. Keep rescue equipment, a telephone and emergency numbers poolside.

Learn to swim and avoid water-related activities if you’ve been drinking alcohol. Children ages 14 and under should never operate a personal watercraft.



We at Macomb Township Fire Department encourage everyone who owns a pool or engages in water sport activities to act responsibly and learn CPR. We teach the American Heart Association Family & Friends (non-certifying class) free of charge.

Call (586) 677-1262 for schedule and details.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2008) [cited 2008 March 23]. Available from: URL: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.

CPSC's Pool/Spa Safety and Drowning Prevention Videos
Drowning Prevention PSA

SafeKids USA, Injury Facts – Drowning
http://usa.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?folder_id=540&content_item_id=1032

United States Consumer Products Safety Commission

U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (US). Boating Statistics – 2006 [online]. 2008. [cited 2008 March 26]. Available from URL: www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating_Statistics_2006.pdf.