

Pool of Knowledge

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May is National Water Safety Month

In recognition of water-related recreational activities in the United States, and the resulting need for ongoing public health education on safer water practices, May 2016, is recognized as National Water Safety Month. The Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) uses this annual observance month to raise awareness about healthy and safe recreational water practices.



In San Bernardino County, National Water Safety Month is being celebrated through educational programs, social media outreach, and the distribution of water safety-themed materials. To learn more about water safety, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\), Injury Prevention & Control: Home and Recreational Safety](#).

ABCs of Water Safety



Every day, approximately ten people die from unintentional drowning. Two of these ten will be children 14 or younger. Furthermore, drowning is the sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of death for children 1 to 14. The majority of drownings occur in residential swimming pools and spas. Neglecting supervision, only for a moment, puts children at risk. Drowning is 100% preventable when these steps are followed:

A = Active Adult Supervision

Assign an adult to supervise and maintain constant eye contact of the children in and around the swimming area. This should be the adult's primary responsibility, regardless of how many adults are present. Make sure the supervising adult has a whistle, bracelet, or water watcher tag to reinforce which adult is in charge. Maintain a clear view (no trees, bushes or other obstacles) from the home to the swimming pool and spa. Remove children from the swimming pool or spa if you become distracted, such as going to the restroom, answering the door, or answering the phone. Make sure the supervising adult knows all emergency services phone numbers, and contact info. **Floaties or other inflatable flotation devices are not life jackets and should never be substituted for adult supervision.**

B = Barriers

Make sure there is a fence enclosure that separates your swimming pool and spa from the home, play areas, side yards, and the neighbor's yard. Make sure all gates are self-closing and self-latching. Several layers of barriers isolating the pool and spa from children should be installed. Besides the isolation fence, one or more of the following enhanced safety features can provide more protection:

- Approved swimming pool and spa safety cover (will support the weight of a person)

- Approved swimming pool and spa alarm.
- Exit alarms on doors providing access to the swimming pool and spa.
- Keep all doors and windows leading to the swimming pool and spa area locked.
- Doors providing access to the swimming pool and spa equipped to be self-closing and self-latching with a release mechanism high enough to be out of the reach of a child.
- The main-door from the garage should be self-closing and self-latching with a release mechanism high enough to be out of the reach of a child.
- Perimeter yard fence equipped with a self-closing and self-latching gate.

All chairs, tables, large toys or other objects, which would allow a child to climb up to reach the gate latch or enable the child to climb over the isolation fence, should be removed or kept inside the fenced area.

C = Classes

Adults should take a rescue breathing and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class, maintain current certification, and learn proper rescue techniques. They should also keep rescue equipment at poolside. All children should take swimming lessons. Kids can develop swim skills through qualified and on-going instruction. Families should attend a water safety workshop together and discuss the family rules for when children are allowed to swim (i.e. only when there is active adult supervision).

Information taken from www.sbdpn.org and <http://www.abcpoolsafety.org>.

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Scott Stanley, Health Education Specialist II at 800-442-2283 or Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov.

We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.