



Graham Fire & Rescue

WATER SAFETY

Drowning is a quick and silent killer. In the time it takes to:

...cross the room for a towel (10 seconds), a child in the bathtub can become submerged.

...answer the phone (2 minutes), that child can lose consciousness.

...sign for a package at your front door (4 to 6 minutes), a child submerged in the bathtub or pool can sustain permanent brain damage.

As if there isn't enough to worry about as a parent, with summer comes the threat of water to your child. While water can be a source of endless hours of fun and enjoyment, recognize it also poses a hazard to children of all ages. Follow these water safety rules to keep your kids safe during the summer.

- ✓ Buy your child a life vest that fits properly. Check for proper weight and size by picking the child up by the shoulders of the life jacket. Ears and chins shouldn't slip through (if they do, the jacket is too big). Make sure the jacket doesn't ride up. Small children need life jackets with head support and a strap between the legs. Many children and adolescents think life jackets and life preservers are hot, bulky, and ugly. This is no longer true. Newer models look better, feel better, and are safe.
- ✓ Life vests should be worn: on docks, boats, rafts, inner tubes, riverbanks and around deep or swift water.
- ✓ Never use toys like plastic rings or water wings in place of a life vest. The new inflatable design life vests may look like life preservers, but are not recommended for children. Boat cushions are also not considered adequate protection.
- ✓ Constantly supervise children. Unlike the movies, real drownings happen quickly and silently, with no splashes or cries for help. That's why no one should be on the water alone. Don't expect on-duty lifeguards to supervise your children. At social gatherings, take turns being "designated adults" to supervise children near the water. Teach younger children to only swim in supervised areas where an adult is present and watching them closely. Teach your child to wait for permission before getting into the water.

- ✓ Empty all buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use. Store them upside-down and out of children's reach.
- ✓ Keep toilet lids shut and use toilet locks.
- ✓ Enforce and model all water safety rules. Never allow running on pool decks or docks. Give praise when rules are obeyed. Restrict water play if the rules are broken.
- ✓ Have your child practice wearing a life vest. If a child panics in the water and thrashes about, he or she may turn over, even if wearing a life vest with a collar designed to keep the child on his or her back. Having children practice wearing a life vest will prevent them from panicking and rolling over.
- ✓ Teach your child about the power of water and about water hazards like currents, cold water and sudden drop-offs. Do not let children dive into water unless the child has learned proper diving techniques, an adult is present and the depth of the water is greater than 9 feet.