

# Consumer Product Safety Commission

## BACKYARD POOL:

### ALWAYS Supervise Children, Safety Commission Warns

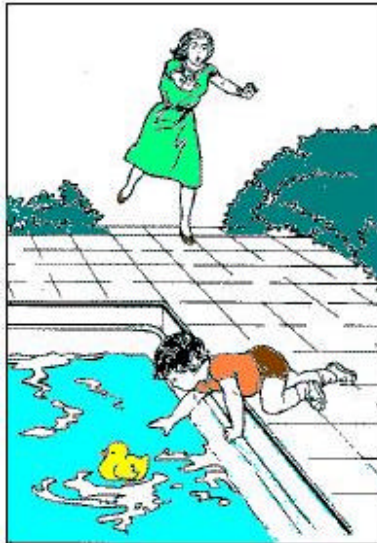
CPSC Document #5097

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an average of 350 children under five years of age drown each year in swimming pools, many in residential pools. The Commission estimates that another 2,600 children under age five are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year following submersion incidents. Some of these submersions result in permanent brain damage.

Nationally, drowning is a leading cause of death to children under five.

The key to preventing these tragedies is to have layers of protection. This includes placing barriers around your pool to prevent access, using pool alarms, closely supervising your child and being prepared in case of an emergency. CPSC offers these tips to prevent drowning:

- Fences and walls should be at least 4 feet high and installed completely around the pool. Fence gates should be self-closing and self-latching. The latch should be out of a small child's reach.
- If your house forms one side of the barrier to the pool, then doors leading from the house to the pool should be protected with alarms that produce a sound when a door is unexpectedly opened.



- A power safety cover -- a motor powered barrier that can be placed over the water area -- can be used when the pool is not in use.
- Keep rescue equipment by the pool and be sure a portable phone is poolside with emergency numbers posted. Knowing cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can be a lifesaver.
- For aboveground pools, steps and ladders to the pool should be secured and locked or removed when the pool is not in use.
- If a child is missing, always look in the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Pool alarms can be used as an added precaution. Underwater pool alarms generally perform better and can be used in conjunction

with pool covers. CPSC advises that consumers use remote alarm receivers so the alarm can be heard inside the house or in other places away from the pool.

**PARENTS AND GUARDIANS: ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT A DROWNING. WATCH YOUR CHILD CLOSELY AT ALL TIMES. MAKE SURE DOORS LEADING TO THE POOL AREA ARE CLOSED AND LOCKED. YOUNG CHILDREN CAN QUICKLY SLIP AWAY AND INTO THE POOL**

THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION CAUTIONS DIVERS ABOUT IMPROPER DIVING PRACTICES.

Diving injuries can result in quadriplegia, paralysis below the neck, to divers who hit the bottom or side of a swimming pool, according to CPSC. Divers should observe the following precautions:

- Never dive into aboveground pools. They are too shallow.
- Don't dive from the side of an in-ground pool. Enter the water feet first.
- Dive only from the end of the diving board and not from the sides.
- Dive with your hands in front of you and always steer up immediately upon entering the water to avoid hitting the bottom or sides of the pool.

- Don't dive if you have been using alcohol or drugs, because your reaction time may be too slow.

Improper use of pool slides presents the same danger as improper diving techniques.  
Never slide down headfirst  
-- slide down feet first only.

000108

CPSC offers three free publications consumers can use to help prevent child drowning: "Safety Barrier Guidelines for Pools," "How to Plan for the Unexpected," and "Guidelines for Entrapment Hazards: Making Pools and Spas Safer." Copies of these publications can be obtained on CPSC's web site or by writing "Pool Safety," CPSC, Washington, D.C., 20207.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. To report a dangerous product or a product related injury, you can go to [CPSC's forms page](#) and use the first on-line form on that page. Or, you can call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (301) 595-7054, or send the information to [info@cpsc.gov](mailto:info@cpsc.gov). Consumers can obtain this publication and other publication information from the [Publications section](#) of CPSC's web site or by sending a request to [publications@cpsc.gov](mailto:publications@cpsc.gov). If you would like to receive CPSC's recall notices the same day they are issued, you can subscribe to CPSC's [e-mail list](#).