

IPC Drowning Prevention Tips

Check Your Water Safety Knowledge

1. What age person is at greatest risk of drowning?

- A. 60+ B. Infants C. 2 D. 14

2. When do most drownings occur?

- A. Vacations B. Weekend days C. Work days D. Nights

3. Under what circumstances do most drownings occur?

- A. Intermittent child supervision around water B. Victim swam alone
C. Victim not wearing life jacket D. All of the above

4. Who is a child's best lifeguard?

- A. A nationally certified lifeguard B. A certified babysitter
C. A swimming instructor D. Parents

5. What is the *best* way to prevent drowning or submersion brain damage in children?

- A. Fence your pool B. Keep doors/windows to pool locked and alarmed
C. Use layers of protection D. Constant adult supervision

6. How much time elapses between when a child was last seen and the child drowns?

- A. 5 minutes B. 1 hour C. 20 minutes D. 3 hours

7. Who is safely supervising a child in water?

- 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. One adult per child, casually chatting within 5 feet of the water's edge

8. Silent drowning is frequently related to

- A. A seizure B. Impairment of judgment due to alcohol, drugs or hypothermia
C. Unconsciousness from any causes D. All of the above

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

Water safety has no one simple solution. Drowning prevention means creating *Layers of Protection* for children and adults.

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 playing 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 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 life jacket whenever boating or on a dock
- Stay away from drains in pool/spa bottoms and sides
- Know where the pump shuts off and how to operate it

For Open Water

- Check weather postings for strong winds, currents and sea life dangers
- 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
- Stay at least 10 feet away from the hull of boats when swimming
- 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.

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, and what to do in an emergency
- Always file a float plan, 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
- Never allow people in the water less than 10 feet from the hull of the boat, especially in calm winds
- Never drive a boat while/after consuming alcohol or drugs

For Submerged Vehicle

- 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
- Remove seat belts until vehicle hits water
- Try to open doors until interior of vehicle is filled with water and pressure equalizes
- Wait for rescuers, seconds count
- Try to rescue more passengers than you can carry in each attempt
- Try to swim ashore against current, debris or significant distance
- 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, if shore is too far to safely swim the distance
- Remain holding onto structure until rescue help arrives to prevent exhaustion and be easier to find