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Swimming pools should be a place for you and your family to enjoy time together. However, each year thousands of families confront swimming pool related tragedies of drowning or near-drowning of young children. Installing your pool properly and understanding the safety requirements can help to prevent such tragedies and ensure that your family enjoys a safe pool for many years to come.

Statistics

- Each year about 300 children under the age of 5 years old drown in residential swimming pools.
- Each year another 2,300 children under the age of 5 years are treated in emergency rooms after being submerged for extended periods of time.
- 75 per cent of children involved were between the ages of 1 and 3 years old.
- Boys between the ages of 1 and 3 years old are the most likely victims of fatal or near-fatal submersions.
- Most victims were being supervised by one or both parents when the swimming pool accident occurred.
- Nearly half were last seen in the house and 23 percent were last seen on a porch, patio or yard.
- This means about 69% of victims were last seen in an area other than the pool but were later found drowned or submerged.
- 65% of the accidents occurred in a family owned pool and 33 % occurred in a pool owned by relatives or friends.

- Fewer than 2% of pool accidents were a result of children trespassing on property where they didn't live or belong.
- 77 per cent of pool accident victims had been missing for five minutes or less when they were found submerged in the pool.

Prevention

- The best way to prevent these tragedies is with proper installation of the pool and the accompanying safety measures.
- Pools meeting certain conditions are required to have permits and meet all safety barrier requirements.
 - Pools that have a capacity of 5000 gallons or more.
 - Pools that are more than 24" in depth. This will include most spas and hot tubs and, yes, some inflatable pools.
 - Pools that exceed 150 square feet of surface area. For circular pools, this is about 14 feet in diameter.
- A successful pool barrier prevents a child from getting OVER, UNDER OR THROUGH and keeps the child from gaining access to the pool except when supervising adults are present.
 - The pool must be surrounded by an approved fence or other barrier.
 - Barrier must be at least 48" above the surrounding walking surface.
 - No openings in the barrier may exceed 4".
 - Maximum opening size for chain link fencing is 2 ¼ inches square.
 - Barriers shall be located and constructed such that they do not create a climbing path.
- Above ground pools may serve as their own barrier provided the pool walls or pool walls and an attached guard are at least 48" tall.
 - Steps and ladders to above ground pools must be designed to be secured, locked or removed to prevent access.
- Doors from the dwelling that enter directly to the pool area must be equipped with automatic alarms.
 - The alarm must sound for at least 30 seconds.
 - The alarm must be loud (at least 85 dBA) and be distinct.