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EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



**Royal Life Saving**  
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



FACT SHEET No.26

# Pool Safety Devices

## Q. What is the best method for preventing drowning deaths in backyard swimming pools?

A. Pool fencing is the most effective means of restricting a child's access to water and has saved many lives. However, when children are in the pool area active adult supervision is required at all times. Backyard swimming pools are the most common location where children drown, accounting for half of all drowning deaths of children aged 0-4 years.

## Q. What are pool safety devices?

A. Pool safety devices are products that can be used around the backyard swimming pool or by the child to reduce a child's risk of drowning. They can be used to restrict a child's access to water, to alert parents when gates are opened, to sound an alarm when the child gets wet, or keep children afloat if they fall in.

## Q. What are the different types of pool safety devices?

A. There are a range of pool safety devices that have been developed over the years to prevent children from drowning. These include: gate alarms, pool alarms, motion detectors (pictured), heat detectors, wrist bands, different gate designs, pool covers, gate locks and lifejackets.

## Q. Does Royal Life Saving recommend any particular device(s)?

A. No, Royal Life Saving believes, and research has shown, that a well maintained and fully functioning pool fence and gate in combination with active adult supervision is the most effective method for preventing children from drowning in backyard swimming pools.

## Q. Are there any benefits in using these devices?

A. In some circumstances a pool safety device can provide another layer of protection when used alongside compliant and well maintained pool fences, gates that self-close and self-latch and active adult supervision. Each device has strengths and limitations which should be taken into consideration when thinking about what you are trying to prevent. For example you may have older children who can use the pool but you want to be warned when the pool gate is opened, thus a gate alarm may be appropriate in this circumstance.

## Q. If I want to purchase a pool safety device, what do I need to know?

A. Each device has its strengths and limitations. Some of the strengths include further restricting access, sounding an alarm when the barrier is breached, or keeping the child afloat when in the water. Limitations include needing to maintain the device, being able to turn off the device and forgetting to turn it on, replacing batteries, limited time the alarm may sound for (e.g. when gate is open only), being set off by non human factors (animals, debris, weather), needing to be placed on the child for it to be effective, needing to be reset / replaced after use, time to set-up and take down, space for installation, storage when not in use, needing to work with a range of different aged pool users, problems with the alarm going off when adults not around, knowing where the child is when the alarm sounds, and distance from receiver to alarm.

**ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.**

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**  
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**



## Pool Safety Devices Checklist:

If you are thinking about purchasing a pool safety device please consider the following:

- Battery life
- Distance from receiver
- False alarms
- Weather conditions
- Animals
- Use of space in and around the pool
- Age of children
- Intended purpose

**A POOL SAFETY DEVICE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EFFECTIVE POOL FENCE, GATE AND ACTIVE ADULT SUPERVISION**

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