

01

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



FACT SHEET No.01

Supervise

Q. What is supervision?

A. Supervision is constant visual contact with your child. You should be within arms' reach and be in a position to respond quickly. It is not an occasional glance while you nap, read or undertake household chores, and it is not looking outside at your kids playing while you are inside.

Q. What is active supervision?

A. Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your children all of the time, when they are in, on or around the water. You must be within arms' reach, interacting with your child and be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency.

Q. How can multi-tasking affect supervision?

A. Parents are busy and often try to do many things at once to save time. When you multi-task you can become distracted and do not give your full attention to maintaining the safety of your children. Distractions include: doorbell, phone, meal times, toilet breaks etc.

Q. Can older children watch younger children?

A. No. Parents leaving young children in the care of older siblings has been a factor in a number of toddler drowning deaths. Older children are not equipped with the skills to perceive and respond to an emergency situation, nor should they be given this responsibility.

Q. What is the best way to supervise children at parties?

A. If there are a small number of children, make an adult responsible for their care. A supervisor should wear a Keep Watch 'Designated Child Supervisor' Hat and if that supervisor leaves they should hand the hat (responsibility) over to another adult to take over. If there are a large number of children, leave an adult stationed at each different place where the children will play to monitor that area.

Real Life Story - A Family's Tragedy

A 2 year old girl drowned after falling into a backyard swimming pool. The little girl drowned, after her grandmother, who was watching her, went to answer the front door.

"I'm absolutely distraught" said the girl's grandmother. "I was inside the house for only a minute, but it was enough time for her to climb on a table that had been left against the pool fence. She opened the gate, got inside the fence and fell into the pool. I will never be able to forgive myself for letting this happen".

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**



Supervision Checklist:

- Everything ready for bathing your child or going swimming e.g. towels, dry clothes, cordless phone or answering machine on etc
- Child actively supervised within arms' reach
- All of your attention focused on your child all of the time when they are in, on, or around water
- Child not left alone or in the care of an older child when around water or in the bath
- Prepared to get wet in case of an emergency

DROWNING HAPPENS QUICKLY AND SILENTLY.

ALWAYS ACTIVELY SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD AROUND WATER.

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02

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FACT SHEET No.02

Restrict Access



Q. What does restricting access mean?

A. Restricting access means ensuring there is a barrier between your child and a body of water. This can be done in two ways:

- **Barrier around the water** – this includes a pool / spa fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate in accordance with AS1926, closing the door to the bathroom after use, using pool/spa/tank covers, placing mesh on water features and fish ponds, ensuring lids are securely on nappy buckets. Note: Inflatables over a depth of 300mm need to be fenced by law.
- **Barrier around the child** – This takes the form of a Child Safe Play Area that can be used inside or outside the home and is especially effective for water you cannot fence like dams on farms.

Restricting access when combined with the other Keep Watch actions of Supervise, Water Awareness and Resuscitate are highly effective in preventing child drowning.

Q. Why do barriers fail?

A. Barriers can fail when gates are left propped open, fences and gates aren't maintained and climbable objects are left against the fence. Royal Life Saving encourages parents and guardians to regularly inspect their pool by downloading and completing a home pool safety checklist from www.homepoolsafety.com.au.

Q. Is there a better method than restricting access?

A. Yes, removing the hazard is more effective in preventing your child from drowning than restricting access. You can remove the hazard by emptying the bathtub and buckets after use and filling in postholes, ditches and any other water features or hazards that are no longer used.

Q. What is the benefit of Child Safe Play Areas?

A. Child Safe Play Areas are particularly effective for restricting a child's access to bodies of water that you cannot fence. Therefore they are effective on farms where dams are used for stock and cannot be isolated. They can also be used both outside and inside the house and assist parents in being able to actively supervise children.

Real Life Story - Home Pool Safety

"After hearing about Royal Life Saving's Home Pool Safety Initiative on television, I was so moved by the information presented I decided to inspect our pool fence in detail. We have recently had our first child in November 2009 and she is very keen on water, she loves our home pool almost too much. When inspecting the fence I found two base screws rusted through and snapped off, leaving one piece of our fence on only 2 rusting screws. Consequently I knocked off early today and repaired the fence with new screws and mounting. Thank you RLSSA!"

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Restrict Access Checklist:

- Pool/spa fenced effectively. Completed checklist from www.homepoolsafety.com.au
- Pool/spa fence and gate regularly inspected and maintained
- Bathtub drained and door to the bathroom closed
- Child Safe Play Area established. Visited www.keepwatch.com.au for Child Safe Play Areas information and Fact Sheet No. 6
- Thin layer of mesh installed under the water surface on fish ponds and water features around the home
- All water bodies with a depth of 300mm or more fenced in accordance with State or Territory legislation. See Fact Sheet No. 9 for more information on pool toys and Fact Sheet No. 10 for wading pools

FENCE/GATE/MAINTAIN

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FACT SHEET No.03

Water Awareness



Q. What is water awareness?

A. Water awareness is a term which covers a range of strategies which can help ensure your child's safety when in, on, or around water. This includes water familiarisation, checking for and removing water hazards (e.g. buckets), setting rules around water and discussing water safety with your child.

Q. What is water familiarisation?

A. Water familiarisation classes are generally held at public swimming pools and aquatic centres and provide an opportunity for parents and carers to get their child involved in the development of aquatic skills and water confidence, while increasing social, emotional, mental and physical skills in a safe environment.

Q. What is the difference between water awareness and learn to swim?

A. Water awareness classes, such as Royal Life Saving's Swim and Survive Wonder Program focus on the gradual introduction of very basic skills, such as moving in the water, getting the face wet and blowing bubbles for children aged 6 to 36 months. The Courage program is aimed at children aged 3 to 5 years and teaches water confidence. Learn to swim classes are suitable for children 5 years and over and focus on developing the basic skills taught in water awareness classes and turning them into recognisable strokes and the confidence to swim without being held by an adult or carer.

Q. What else can I do to be water aware?

A. You can use bath time as a time for water awareness, letting your baby or child feel, experience and play with water. You can also put rules in place for children when they go near water and ensure that parents and adults uphold these rules themselves to set a good example. When visiting new aquatic locations you can examine these together with your child and discuss any safety issues and rules for that location with your child.

Q. What should I expect from a water awareness class?

A. Generally, a water awareness class will involve a small number of parents/carers with their child participating with an instructor who facilitates learning through fun games, songs and activities. There is also a focus on providing key water safety messages to parents and carers. Typical skills taught to children include: entering and exiting the water safely with a carer, being gently rocked and being encouraged to splash and kick their legs.

Q. Can I practice these skills at home?

A. Yes, you can also play in the home pool with your child or use bath time to help them become familiar with water. Bath time is especially good as you can familiarise children with water almost from birth. Use a baby bath big enough to allow movement. Hold the baby underneath their head and move them forwards and backwards, allowing them to feel the movement of the water.

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Water Awareness Checklist:

- Bath time used as a time for water awareness
- Rules in place for children when they go near water
- New aquatic locations examined with children
- Hazards and risks at new locations discussed and rules set
- Parents at picnics and parties have a designated child supervisor near water actively supervising
- Parents at picnics and parties near water upholding rules
- Visited local pool or called Royal Life Saving to find out how to participate in water familiarisation classes

FAMILIARISE/
DEVELOP/EDUCATE
ENROL YOUR CHILD
AND EXPERIENCE
WATER TOGETHER

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FACT SHEET No.04

Resuscitate



Q. What is Resuscitation?

A. Resuscitation or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) involves stimulating the heart and breathing air into the lungs to preserve or restore life. Resuscitation involves establishing or maintaining an airway, breathing and circulation.

Q. Why should I learn resuscitation?

A. Resuscitation is a skill for life. In most cases when an emergency occurs, a family member is the first on the scene. In fact, many children are alive today because their parents knew how to perform CPR and responded quickly. Having the skills to react in an emergency situation can mean the difference between life and death while you wait for emergency care to arrive.

Q. What are the legal implications of doing CPR?

A. Lay persons or volunteers acting as Good Samaritans are under no legal obligation to assist a fellow human being. However, you need not fear litigation if you come to the aid of a fellow human in need. The Australian Resuscitation Council and Royal Life Saving encourages people to provide assistance to any person in need. Having decided to assist, a standard of care appropriate to your training (or lack of training) is expected. Although legislation varies between the States and Territories, if performing CPR, you are generally expected to act in good faith and without recklessness.

Q. What do I need to say when I call 000?

A. When you call 000 you should stay on the line, not panic and answer all the questions the operator asks you. It will be helpful to know your nearest crossroad for the ambulance.

Q. What resources can help me learn CPR?

A. Royal Life Saving has a number of CPR related resources and courses available. There is a handy mini CPR chart on a magnet that can be stuck to the fridge, a full size CPR chart that can be used near your backyard swimming pool, CPR in a box and courses that are run in a variety of locations across all States and Territories.

Real Life Story - CPR: A Real Life Saver

In February 2008, knowing CPR helped one husband and wife save their two children from drowning. While their parents were momentarily distracted while visiting relatives, the couple's two sons made their way into a backyard swimming pool. After a relative raised the alarm, the boys were found pale and unconscious. Each parent immediately began performing CPR on the boys and they each vomited up water. Gradually the boys began to gasp for air and started breathing as ambulances arrived. They have since made a full recovery and the parents credit knowing CPR with saving the lives of their boys.

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Resuscitate Checklist:

- Check for danger to self, to bystanders and to victim (Danger)
- Shout "Are you ok?" and gently squeeze the victim's shoulder (Response)
- Send for help (Send)
- Clear and maintain airway (Airway)
- Look, listen and feel for breathing (Breathing)
- If no signs of life, commence CPR (Compression)
- If available, grab a defibrillator and follow the prompts (Defibrillation)
- Enrolled in a public CPR course. Visit www.royallifesaving.com.au to enrol in a course

LEARN/UPDATE/ACT

ENROL AND
UPDATE ANNUALLY

JUST PUSH AND BLOW,
HAVE A GO AND AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE CALL 000

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FACT SHEET No.05

Bath Time Safety

Q. How many bathtub drowning deaths occur each year?

A. In Australia, on average, 5 children under the age of 5 drown and 47 are hospitalised due to bathtub drowning or near drowning incidents each year. One in four hospitalisations results in permanent injury such as brain damage. To address this, the Keep Watch @ Bath Time program has been developed which has a brochure and a tap hanger to inform parents and carers of how to prevent their child from drowning at bath time.

Q. When do bathtub drowning deaths occur?

A. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths occur when there is an interruption to the bathing routine such as the doorbell or phone ringing while a parent is bathing a child. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths in Australia are of children less than 2 years old.

Q. Can I leave my child alone for a small amount of time?

A. No. Many parents and carers mistakenly believe they will "only be gone for a minute" but this is enough time for tragedy to occur. The majority of bathtub drowning deaths in Australia are of children who were already in the bathtub when they drowned. If you must leave the bathroom – take your child with you. Do not leave children in the care of older children, they may not perceive the amount of danger a young child may be in.

Q. Why do parents leave their child unsupervised in the bath?

A. Parents leave their child unsupervised in the bath because they are:

- Fetching forgotten clothes/towel
- Answering the door
- Doing the washing
- Answering/making phone calls
- Doing the dishes
- Going to the toilet
- Attending to other children

Q. Can you use a bath seat or bathing aid?

A. Yes, however bath seats or bath aids are no substitute for active adult supervision. These devices do not prevent children from climbing or falling out of the seat and drowning, and parents should not believe their child is safer in one of these devices.

Real Life Story - Bathtub Drowning Death

The importance of supervision and restricting access to water for children under the age of 5 has again been highlighted with the recent drowning death of a baby boy in a bathtub in QLD. Unbeknown to the parents, the baby gained access to the bathroom through a door that was left ajar. He was found by his parents face down and unconscious in the bathtub. The parents performed CPR until the ambulance arrived however the boy was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

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Bath Time Safety Checklist:

- Everything ready for bathing
- Cold water run first and turned off last
- Tested water to ensure it is comfortably warm
- Water kept to a minimum depth
- Child actively supervised by responsible adult
- Child supervised within arms' reach and never left alone



ACTIVELY SUPERVISE
@ BATH TIME

Be Prepared
Be Within Arms' Reach
All of Your Attention
All of the Time

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FACT SHEET No.06

Child Safe Play Areas



Produced by Chantel de Sousa at
www.illustrationroom.com.au

Q. What is a child safe play area?

A. A child safe play area is a carefully planned, designated location which is securely fenced and helps to prevent a young child from gaining access to water without adult supervision. Pool fencing requirements, including appropriate 'child resistant' gates and latches, can be used as a guide in planning a safe play area.

Q. Why are child safe play areas useful?

A. Child safe play areas are particularly effective for restricting a child's access to water you cannot fence. Therefore they are effective on farms where dams are used for stock and cannot be isolated. They can also be used both outside and inside the house and assist parents in being able to actively supervise children.

Q. Where can child safe play areas be used?

A. Child safe play areas have commonly been used on farms to prevent children from wandering into the farm environment or a farm dam without adult supervision. However, child safe play areas can also be used inside the home to keep children safe and prevent children from gaining access to the bathroom or other drowning hazards within the home.

Q. What are the features of an effective child safe play area?

A. A child safe play area should be securely fenced, without any water bodies or drowning hazards within it. It should contain children's toys and equipment to ensure it is a fun place children like to play in. It should be easily observable by parents and carers and be regularly maintained to ensure it is always in good working order.

Q. How should the fence/gate on a child safe play area be constructed?

A. The fence of the child safe play area should be made of materials that are sturdy and are not easily climbable by children. There should be no gaps between the fence and the ground and be high enough to prevent children climbing over them. The gate to the child safe play area should be self-closing and self-latching and should never be propped open under any circumstances.

Real Life Story - Dam Drowning Tragedy

A toddler has drowned in a farm dam in Victoria. The boy went missing from his rural family home and was found in a dam the following morning. He was last seen in the backyard of his family home and walked a kilometre to a dam on a neighbour's property, where he drowned. This tragic case highlights the importance of active supervision and restricting young children's access to water through the use of securely fenced child safe play areas.

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or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**

Child Safe Play Area Checklist:

- The area is securely fenced
- The area is regularly maintained
- The area is placed close to the home or inside the home
- Children are easily supervised when in Child Safe Play Area
- Not easily climbable
- Has a self-closing, self-latching gate
- No gaps under or through the fence

A SECURE AND WELL MAINTAINED CHILD SAFE PLAY AREA CAN PREVENT DROWNING

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FACT SHEET No.07

Home Water Safety



Q. What areas around the home can present a drowning risk?

A. The backyard pool and spa are obvious places in which drowning deaths can and have occurred. However, there are many other aquatic areas around the home which present a threat to young children including buckets and other vessels that can contain water. Parents/carers must remember to always empty the bathtub, close the bathroom door, empty eskies and buckets and store out of reach of children.

Q. Where have drowning deaths around the home occurred in the past?

A. Drowning deaths have occurred in the following places:

- Buckets
- Inflatable pools
- Eskies
- Water tanks
- Irrigation channels
- Swimming pools
- Dams / Rivers
- Bathtubs
- Drains
- Pet bowls
- Spas
- Creeks/Streams
- Fishponds
- Water features / fountains

Q. When do drowning deaths around the home occur?

A. Studies show the majority of toddler drowning deaths peak when parents' attention may be divided such as the arrival home of other siblings or the preparation of evening meals. Be aware of additional distractions and do not let them interfere with constant visual supervision of your child when in, on, or around water.

Q. How can I supervise children at social settings?

A. Often at parties and gatherings people can assume that someone else is watching the child/children. In fact, it is possible that no one is supervising. Nominating a designated "child supervisor" during parties is a way of ensuring that children are supervised at all times. If this person needs to leave for any reason, ensure a new supervisor is appointed or regularly rotate the supervision responsibilities. If alcohol is being consumed, supervisors should be sober. A designated child supervisor hat is available to help with supervision and can be purchased from www.keepwatch.com.au

Q. Can I get my older children to look after the younger ones?

A. Never leave young children in the care of older children (under 16).

Real Life Story - Esky Drowning Death

A family learned firsthand of the dangers household objects can present to children when their 2 year old drowned in an esky at a family celebration. The ice in the esky had melted and after dropping a toy into the esky, the 2 year old tried to retrieve it, but fell in and was unable to get out. As a result the little girl was trapped in the esky and drowned in just a small amount of water. This tragedy is a warning to all parents to take care to remove or secure all drowning hazards in and around their homes.

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Home Water Safety Checklist:

- Checked for water dangers such as open drains around the home
- Set of rules established for your children around water
- Child Safe Play Area established. Visited www.keepwatch.com.au for Child Safe Play Area information and Fact Sheet No. 6
- Buckets emptied and put away out of child's reach
- Empty inflatable pools and put them securely away after use

DROWNING HAPPENS
QUICKLY AND SILENTLY!

ALWAYS KEEP WATCH
OVER YOUR CHILDREN
AT HOME.

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FACT SHEET No.08

Home Pool Safety



Q. Why should I be concerned with home pool safety?

A. Home swimming pools are the most dangerous aquatic location for young children. In 2009/10 33 children under the age of five died from drowning. Of these 16 children drowned in swimming pools.

Q. How do so many drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools?

A. Home swimming pools are located close to the house and a child's natural curiosity may bring them into contact with the pool. In the majority of home swimming pool drowning deaths the toddler entered the pool area and drowned without the knowledge of the parent. The most common entries into home pools for toddlers are: via an open gate or one that has been propped open, through a house door, or by using nearby equipment to climb over the fence.

Q. Will I hear my child calling for help when drowning?

A. No. Many parents mistakenly believe they can listen out for their child but drowning can occur in a matter of seconds without any splashing or crying to alert parents/caregivers.

Q. How can I prevent my child from drowning?

A. There are several things you can do to prevent drowning:

1. Fence the pool/spa with a four sided fence in accordance with AS1926. This means that access to the pool/spa is via a self-closing, self-latching gate, not the house.
2. Any equipment not related to the function of the pool/spa must be securely stored outside the pool area. The gate to the pool/spa should never be propped open.
3. Regularly inspect your fence (a quick check once a month) using the Home Pool Safety Checklist (downloadable from www.homepoolsafety.com.au) to ensure your fence and gate are in good working order.

Q. What is the Keep Watch program?

A. Royal Life Saving has created the Keep Watch program to prevent toddler drowning in Australia. Keep Watch has four key actions and toddler drowning prevention involves all of these strategies: Supervise, Restrict Access, Water Awareness and Resuscitate.

Real Life Story - Home Pool Tragedy

In a warning to parents everywhere, the second child in 2 days has drowned in a backyard pool in NSW. The toddler gained access to the pool, when the self-latching mechanism on the sliding door to the pool did not work. The toddler was found face down in the backyard pool by relatives and was taken to hospital but she could not be revived. Parents are being urged to learn CPR and to ensure their pool fences are properly secured.

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Home Pool Safety Checklist:

- Child supervised within arms' reach when in, on, or around the pool or spa
- Pool fenced effectively
- Gate is self-closing and self-latching and never propped open
- Pool regularly maintained (checked at least once a month). Completed checklist from www.homepoolsafety.com.au
- Child enrolled in a water awareness class such as the Swim and Survive Wonder Program www.swimandsurvive.com.au
- Enrolled in a CPR course. Checked www.royallifesaving.com.au for course details
- CPR skills updated annually

FENCE/GATE/MAINTAIN

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FACT SHEET No.09

Pool Toys Safety



Q. What are pool toys?

A. Pool toys are any objects that are used for entertainment around water. They include inflatable balls, noodles, floaties, dive rings, kickboards, inflatable rafts, lilos, inflatable rings, dive rings and other inflatable and non-inflatable toys that can be used in the water. Inflatable wading pools are not toys and are discussed in Fact Sheet No. 10. Life jackets are not pool toys but can be used to provide buoyancy for children in the water. See Fact Sheet No. 19 for more information.

Q. What are the dangers they pose?

A. Pool toys, when left in and around the pool can attract the attention of children and draw them towards the pool. Other pool toys, such as floaties and noodles can also provide parents with a false sense of their child's swimming ability. This can mean parents do not actively supervise their children or leave the pool area to do something else.

Q. What should you look for when purchasing pool toys?

A. When purchasing pool toys you should check the age and weight ranges recommended, ensuring your child is not too old or too heavy. You should also ensure that children do not use pool toys for purposes other than those which are recommended. Pool toys that are inflatable, should be deflated when not in use, checked for leaks before use and all pool toys regardless of if they are inflatable or not, should be stored securely, out of the sight and reach of young children. Never leave pool toys in the pool when they are not in use.

Q. How should I be supervising my child when they are using pool toys?

A. Children should always be actively supervised within arms' reach by a responsible adult when in, on, or around the water, regardless of whether they are using pool toys or not.

Q. Can I use pool toys to rescue someone in trouble?

A. If you see someone in trouble in the water, Royal Life Saving recommends you perform a reach or throw rescue which means you do not enter the water yourself. The ideal objects to use are a reach pole or a personal flotation device. You should make sure you store one of these items around the pool for use in emergencies. Pool toys should be used only as a last resort.

Real Life Story - Pool toys involved in child drowning

A child under five has drowned after making his way into the backyard swimming pool. The child had been missing for about 5 minutes when the parents realised and found the child face-down in the family's swimming pool. It appeared the child made his way through a faulty fence panel after being drawn to a brightly coloured pool noodle and beach ball floating in the pool. Royal Life Saving is again urging people to ensure pool toys are stored securely away from the pool area, out of sight and reach of small children.

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Pool Toys Safety Checklist

When purchasing and using pool toys you should remember to check:

- The age of child the product is recommended for
- The weight of child the product is recommended for
- The instructions for use
- That floaties have three inflatable chambers and fit snugly against the child's arms
- Pool toys used for recommended purposes only
- Inflatable toys are checked before use for any wear and tear such as leaks
- Pool toys are stored securely and deflated if necessary after use
- Children always actively supervised when in, on, or around the water

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FACT SHEET No.11

Public Pool Safety



Q. Who drowns at public swimming pools?

A. In the past decade, 80 people have drowned in public swimming pools. A quarter of these were children under five years of age. While young children are the main victims, non-swimmers who fall in or swimmers caught out of their depth are also at risk.

Q. Why do drowning deaths occur at public swimming pools?

A. Many people mistakenly believe that once they enter a swimming pool facility, the responsibility for their child's safety is transferred to the lifeguards. This is not the case. Lifeguards are not babysitters. Some parents also believe that other parents will keep an eye on their child. Every parent/guardian is responsible for the safety of their own child.

Q. What is the role of a pool lifeguard?

A. The role of the lifeguard in a public pool facility is to oversee the safe operation of the facility and ensure all patrons can safely enjoy their time there. Their responsibilities include: posting warning signs, establishing and enforcing safety rules, cleaning pool decks and basic first aid. Lifeguards often perform these responsibilities for hundreds of patrons at a time so it is important to always supervise your child yourself. Lifeguards are not babysitters!

Q. What is active supervision?

A. Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your children all of the time, when they are in, on or around the water. You must be within arms' reach, interacting with your child and be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency. The age of the child dictates the level of supervision required.

Q. What can I do to make my trip to the public pool safer?

A. Always obey any instructions the lifeguards give you and follow the advice on signs around the pool. Always actively supervise children. Abide by pool rules and report those who do not to the lifeguards.

Real Life Story - Public Pools Tragedy

The Keep Watch @ Public Pools program again reminds parents to supervise their children at the public swimming pool after a tragic drowning of a young boy. The boy was found on the bottom of the public pool, after wandering away from his father while in the change rooms. CPR was administered on the scene by ambulance officers however he died in hospital. Pool staff, lifeguards and the community are in shock at the tragedy. Parents are reminded to be vigilant and to keep watch over children at all times.

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**

Public Pool Safety Checklist:

- At a minimum a child under 10 years of age is actively supervised by a person 16 years or older
- Children 0-5 years actively supervised at all times, parent/guardian within arms' reach in the water
- Parent/caregiver dressed ready for action, including unexpected entry to pool
- Child aged 6-10 years under constant active supervision, with parent/guardian prepared to get wet
- Child aged 11-14 years – checked on by physically going to the point where they are in or around the water



LIFEGUARDS ARE NOT BABYSITTERS!
YOUR CHILD.
YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

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FACT SHEET No.12

Farm Water Safety



Q. Where do toddlers commonly drown on farms?

A. The most common location for toddler drowning deaths on farms are dams. However, the farm environment has a range of other water locations including dams, troughs, irrigation channels, water tanks and swimming pools.

Q. How many children drown on farms?

A. On average 4 children under the age of five drown in farm dams every year and there are approximately 3 hospitalisations for every drowning death.

Q. How do I keep my child safe?

A. In rural areas, it is not always feasible to fence off large water bodies such as lakes or dams, so Royal Life Saving suggests parents create a Child Safe Play Area. Royal Life Saving has also developed the Keep Watch @ The Farm program which provides information and useful resources to improve parent/carer awareness of drowning prevention strategies on farms.

Q. What is a Child Safe Play Area?

A. A Child Safe Play Area is a carefully planned, designated location which is securely fenced and helps to prevent a young child from entering the farm without adult supervision. Pool fencing requirements, including appropriate 'child resistant' gates and latches, can be used as a guide in planning a safe play area. For more information visit www.keepwatch.com.au for Fact Sheet No. 6 Child Safe Play Areas.

Q. Why do parents leave their children unsupervised?

A. There are many reasons why a parent's attention can be diverted from their child. Busy lifestyles, phone calls, visitors, preparing meals and other siblings are just some of the things which demand attention. The Keep Watch program advocates for supervision to be supported by fenced Child Safe Play Areas, water awareness and resuscitation skills.

Real Life Story - Boy Drowns in Farm Dam

A family is grieving after their toddler son drowned in a dam on their family farm. The couple's only son drowned when he wandered off from the main house and walked a kilometre to get to the dam. The father found his son, 2 hours later in the dam and dragged him to shore before starting CPR. Ambulance officers were called but the boy was unable to be resuscitated. This tragic case highlights the importance of supervision and secure Child Safe Play Areas on farms to prevent children wandering off, and terrible tragedies such as this, from occurring.

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Farm Water Safety Checklist:

- Children supervised whenever in, on, or around water
- Securely fenced Child Safe Play Area created close to the house or inside the home
- Unused holes filled in where water can gather such as ditches, dips and postholes
- Water storage such as wells and tanks securely covered
- Keep Watch @ The Farm 'please close the gate' sign, on child safe play area to remind people to close the gate
- People on farms such as farm workers and visitors alert to 'keep watch' for children around water



KEEP WATCH @
THE FARM TO
PREVENT YOUR CHILD
FROM DROWNING

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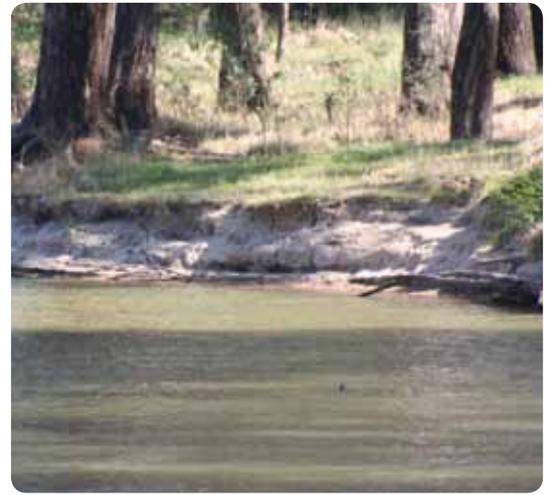


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ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

FACT SHEET No.13

Inland Waterways



Q. Why do drowning deaths occur in inland waterways?

A. There are many reasons. The flat, still surface of an inland waterway can give a false sense of security. Currents, even in seemingly tranquil waterways, can prove dangerous. Inland waterways are not patrolled by lifeguards, and should someone get into trouble, there may be no one there to assist. Swimmers can also get panicked if they get caught on submerged objects, which are present in many of these waterways.

Q. Where do drowning deaths in inland waterways occur?

A. In inland waterways there are many environments where drowning deaths have occurred – rivers, lakes, dams, irrigation channels, water tanks and creeks have all been sites of drowning deaths.

Q. What safety precautions can I take if I want to swim in an inland waterway?

A. Remember that water conditions which may have been suitable previously can change hourly with the current. Submerged objects, like branches or rocks, are often invisible from above the surface and present a real risk of neck and spinal injuries, especially to divers. Always enter the water slowly, feet first – never dive in. Be aware also that cold water can cause hypothermia. Water can be deeper than you think due to steep drop-offs in dams or riverbeds.

Q. Who is drowning in inland waterways?

A. All types and ages of people are drowning in inland waterways, from young children to the elderly. In 2009/10 there were 59 drowning deaths in rivers, creeks and streams, with 3 of these being children under the age of 5. There were also 42 people who drowned in a lake, dam or lagoon of which 4 were children under the age of 5.

Q. Why are inland waterways dangerous?

A. Changing seasonal patterns, flooding and other effects of nature can cause inland waterways to change. Remember if the waterway is flooded don't try to cross it. While it may look calm and shallow on the surface it is possible that the road that was there no longer exists.

Real Life Story - School Camp Drowning

A young boy has drowned in a dam on school camp. The boy was swimming in a dam with friends when he lost his footing and fell into a steep drop off. The child could not make it back to the edge and drowned. The murky water of the dam hampered rescue efforts as it was extremely difficult to locate his body.

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**

Inland Waterways Safety Checklist:

- Checked conditions before entering
- Entered water slowly, feet first
- Care taken around crumbling riverbeds and slippery dam edges
- Underwater obstacles such as rocks, branches and rubbish avoided
- Care taken when walking on unstable, uneven and slippery riverbeds
- Avoided crossing flooded inland waterways

**ALWAYS KEEP WATCH
AROUND NATURAL
WATER ENVIRONMENTS
TO PREVENT DROWNING**

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FACT SHEET No.14

Water Safety on Holidays



Q. Why is water safety on holidays important?

A. While holidaying, you may experience aquatic environments you are unfamiliar with or that have changed since your last visit. To enjoy these locations safely, it is important to know the safety aspects that apply to different aquatic environments.

Q. What should I do if I'm holidaying in an unfamiliar aquatic location?

A. Conditions can change all the time, and a spot that was safe to swim at in the morning, may have developed a strong current by the afternoon. Before you enter any water body, spend time observing it, looking for any rips or currents. Ask a local about the waterway. Never dive in, always enter the water slowly, feet first.

Q. What steps can I take to keep my family safe when holidaying near the water?

A. Discuss with your children that they are not to enter the water without a parent present. Explain that even though they may be competent swimmers at home, the conditions can change dramatically in other environments and they need to be aware of this. Be aware of objects in the water, from rocks to watercraft. Obey any signs to stay in a designated area. Make sure you do the right thing as children will model their behaviour on you. Never swim alone and ensure children are actively supervised – Keep Watch and keep them within arms' reach.

Q. What about if I'm visiting a water park?

A. In exactly the same way as at a public pool, lifeguards at water parks are on hand to ensure that all patrons can enjoy their time at the facility. This does not mean they are responsible for babysitting young children. Parents must continue to actively supervise children within arms' reach at these venues. Please see Fact Sheet No. 11 – Public Pool Safety for more information.

Q. What dangers exist at inland waterways?

A. Many families enjoy holidays at locations near rivers, lakes and dams. It is important to remember that at these locations water conditions can change hourly. These locations can also present dangers with crumbling or slippery banks, shifting floors, submerged objects, watercraft and cold water. Many locations such as rivers, lakes and dams do not have lifeguards on duty.

Real Life Story - Family Holiday Drowning

Two people have drowned whilst on a family holiday. The father and son drowned after being caught in strong currents in a river near their campsite. Unable to make it to safety against the currents, they disappeared below the surface. Locals tried to help but were unable to resuscitate the pair. After the incident locals described the river as unpredictable.

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**

Water Safety on Holidays Checklist:

- Checked conditions with a resident local to the area before entering
- Swam in patrolled areas, where possible
- Condition of all equipment checked before use
- Observed for changing weather conditions
- Observed conditions of water before entering
- Watched out for other people or watercraft when in the water
- Ensured children are actively supervised (within arms' reach) at all times
- Refrained from drinking alcohol if planned to undertake aquatic activity

MAKE SURE YOU DO THE RIGHT THING AS CHILDREN WILL MODEL THEIR BEHAVIOUR ON YOU

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