

Swimming Pool & Hot Tub Safety

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According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), drowning is the second leading cause of death (behind falls) for children 4 years old and under. Studies done by the CPSC have shown that almost 70% of swimming pool accidents occurred when **BOTH PARENTS WERE HOME AND WATCHING THE CHILD!** 10% occurred when responsible adults other than parents were watching the child and 20% of accidents occurred when the children were being watched by a sitter or an older sibling. Of all the accidents that do occur around a pool with small children, 77% of those children had been seen within the previous five minutes! Everyday, approximately 11 children ages 4 or under drown. That's over 4,000 kids a year! And most of these drownings in a pool or hot tub are preventable.

A swimming pool or hot tub in your yard can be very dangerous for children. If possible, do not put a swimming pool or hot tub in your yard until your children are older than 5 years. If you already have a pool or hot tub or are considering getting one, protect your children from drowning by doing the following:

- Never leave your children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- Don't rely on older children to keep an eye on your toddler. They don't have the attention span or ability to properly supervise a young child.
- You **must** put up a fence to separate your house from the pool. Most young children who drown in pools wander out of the house and fall into the pool, or try to hide under a hot tub cover. Install a safety fence at least 4 feet high (preferably 5 feet tall) around all 4 sides of the pool or hot tub. This fence will completely separate these areas from the house and play area of the yard. When installing these fences, use ones that do not have a top rail (this makes it easier for a child to climb over the top) and install gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches higher than your children's reach that are also child resistant. We install what is considered to be the best supplier of child-resistant fences and gates, Guardian Pool Fence Systems. Their fences and poles come in a variety of colors and are removable by an adult. Go to their web site, <http://www.guardianpoolfence.com>.

- A powered surface safety pool cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) adds to the protection of your children but should not be used in place of a safety fence between your house and the pool. The reason why you need a fence is that after a rainstorm or snow fall, the water will tend to accumulate on top of the cover. If a child walks out onto this unstable surface, they can fall into the water and drown.
- Hot tub covers are best used as an insulator, not as a protective means to keep kids out. It is easy to forget to latch the cover down after you have used it. Just like a pool, a protective fence with a childproof gate or self-locking childproofed doors around the hot tub should be used. In all of the homes that we have childproofed, only one has had the cover latched when we came in.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a cordless telephone by the pool. A cell phone is OK, but a cordless phone will allow the 911 dispatchers to know exactly where your home is automatically and time is of the essence during an emergency. Never have a corded phone near a pool or hot tub due to the possibility of electrocution.
- Post rules such as "No running," "No pushing," "No dunking" and "Never swim alone." Always enforce the rules.
- Do not let your child use air-filled "swimming aids" because they are not a substitute for approved life vests and can be dangerous.
- Anyone watching young children around a pool should learn CPR and be able to rescue a child if needed. Contact your local Red Cross for information on CPR classes.
- Stay within an arm's length of your child.
- Remove all toys from the pool after use so children aren't tempted to reach for them.
- After the children are done swimming, secure the pool cover and gate so they can't get back into it.
- Encourage your neighbors to follow pool safety guidelines, including keeping their back gates and doors locked, and their pool gates securely closed and latched.
- Remember, even fencing around your pool, using a powered surface safety cover or a hot tub cover will not prevent all drownings.

Remember, teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water.

Please call us if you have any questions. We can be reached at (303) 726-6828 or info@ColoradoChildproofers.com, and at our web site www.ColoradoChildproofers.com.