



 **Be Pool Safe**

**BE POOL SAFE  
INFORMATION BOOKLET**

[www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au](http://www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au)

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EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



**Royal Life Saving**

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

## ABOUT ROYAL LIFE SAVING

Royal Life Saving is focused on reducing drowning and promoting healthy, active and skilled communities through innovative, reliable, evidence based advocacy; strong and effective partnerships, quality programs, products and services; underpinned by a cohesive and sustainable national organisation.

Royal Life Saving is a public benevolent institution (PBI) dedicated to reducing drowning and turning everyday people into everyday community lifesavers.

We achieve this through:

- Advocacy
- Education
- Training
- Health Promotion
- Aquatic Risk Management
- Community Development
- Research
- Sport, Leadership and Participation
- International Networks

We are guided by the values of: Safety, Quality, Integrity and the Humanitarian tradition and have been serving the Australian community for over 118 years.

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia  
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[www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au)



## BE POOL SAFE INFORMATION BOOKLET

Royal Life Saving is partnering with the NSW Government to enhance the safety of children under the age of five years around backyard swimming pools.

60 children have drowned in NSW swimming pools in the past decade. Backyard swimming pools remain the most common location for both drowning death and injury in kids under 5 in NSW. We hope that together we can address this issue and provide protection to children throughout NSW.

To register your pool visit  
[www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au](http://www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au)

For more water safety information visit  
[www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au)

In Partnership with



## AIM OF THE INFORMATION MANUAL

Preventing drowning and injury in the community is everyone's business. Councils play a vital role in educating the community about drowning prevention.

The aim of this Information Manual is to provide Councils with background information and current models and practices to prevent young children from drowning in the home swimming pool. It is based on injury prevention and health promotion theory and practice.

This Manual provides a collection of information about risk factors, prevention strategies and types of community actions for the prevention of drowning. It should be seen as a guide for helping Councils to communicate the importance of drowning prevention to home swimming pool owners.

When presenting to community groups or on a one-to-one basis about drowning prevention, the following topics are important to include:

- Statistics and facts about home swimming pool drowning (Page 7)
- Risk factors associated with drowning – detailing the causes of drowning deaths which can be changed or avoided to prevent death or serious injury and include factors related to parents, carers, children and the environment (Page 8)
- Actions that home pool owners should follow to reduce the risk of drowning (Pages 11, 12, 13)
- Community actions – how councils and community groups can work together to harness community action and prevent drowning and other injuries (Page 14)
- Fact sheets (Page 14)
- Child Drowning Fact or Fiction (Page 18).

With the implementation of the Swimming Pools (Amendment) Act 2012 there lies a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the responsibilities that backyard swimming pool owners have in ensuring the safety of children.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information has been sourced from the Division of Local Government website [www.olg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au)

Drowning is a leading cause of accidental death in very young children who lack the cognitive and water skills to deal with the danger.

With over 300,000 backyard swimming pools in NSW, swimming pool safety is a vital issue that affects the whole community.

In 2012, a comprehensive review of the Swimming Pools Act 1992 was finalised. This review identified a number of amendments designed to enhance the safety of children under the age of five years around private ('backyard') swimming pools in NSW.

### The Swimming Pools (Amendment) Act 2012

1. NSW Swimming Pools Register available for use from 29 April 2013
2. NSW Swimming pools to be registered by owners by 29 October 2013
3. Pool owners require a compliance certificate before sale or lease of their property from 29 April 2015

The Swimming Pools Amendment Act 2012 commenced on 29 October 2012 and makes a number of amendments to the Swimming Pools Act 1992: Information is provided below regarding the impact of these legislative amendments for pool owners and councils. Additional information about the staged implementation provisions is also provided below.

### Pool Owners:

1. Swimming pool owners are required to register their swimming pools online at [www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au](http://www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au)
2. Swimming Pool owners will be required to self-assess, and state in the register that, to the best of their knowledge, their swimming pool complies with the applicable standard when registering their pool.
3. There is a penalty for owners who fail to register a swimming pool (penalty notice amount of \$220).
4. Swimming pool owners will be required to provide a valid swimming pool compliance certificate before being able to sell or lease a property with a pool.
5. Accredited certifiers under the Building Professional Act 2005 may conduct swimming pool inspections initiated by the pool owner.

### Councils:

1. Councils are required to:
  - i. develop and implement a swimming pool barrier inspection program in consultation with their communities
  - ii. report annually on the number of pool inspections undertaken and the level of compliance with the requirements
  - iii. inspect pools associated with tourist and visitor accommodation and multi-occupancy developments at three year intervals
  - iv. at the request of a pool owner, inspect pools prior to sale or lease
  - v. issue compliance certificates after an inspection which finds a pool barrier compliant with the requirements of the legislation. Compliance certificates are valid for three years.
2. A swimming pool subject to an occupation certificate is exempt from an inspection program for three years from the date of issue of the occupation certificate.
3. Councils may inspect any swimming pool that is the subject of a complaint to the council.
4. Council powers of entry will be consistent with the Local Government Act 1993.
5. Councils may charge a fee for each inspection undertaken (up to a maximum of \$150 for the first inspection and \$100 for one re-inspection resulting from the first inspection).

### Staged implementation provisions:

The Act includes a staged implementation process to facilitate:

1. the development and implementation of the Swimming Pools Register (to commence by no later than 29 April 2013)
2. registration by pool owners of pools (after the register commences and by no later than 29 October 2013)
3. councils' inspection programs (to be developed in consultation with the community, adopted and commenced by no later than 29 October 2013)
4. mandatory inspections by councils of tourist, visitor and multi-occupancy developments, and pools associated with property sale and lease (to commence by no later than 29 April 2015).

Further information will be available as the legislative amendments are implemented.

To check if a pool meets legislative requirements, pool owners and occupiers should contact their local council in the first instance.

## OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE BASED STRATEGIES

To prevent drowning deaths and aquatic related injuries from occurring, a range of community-based actions are required including education, behaviour change, legislation, engineering and technology solutions.

For effective community action, councils, community groups and individuals need to work together to ensure the greatest effect will occur. These strategies should not be seen as individual actions but as part of an overall strategy, which when used in combination, help to provide a safer aquatic environment for children.

### Education / Behaviour Change

Education and behaviour change methods are used to:

- Educate parents and carers of the development stages of children and therefore the importance of supervision
- Inform people of what actions they can take, e.g. programs to learn resuscitation, particularly among parents and carers of children who have exposure to swimming pools
- Educate about structural changes, e.g. current pool fencing legislation.

### Changes to Physical Environment

Technology and engineering reduce injuries by minimizing hazards in the environment and by providing automatic protection e.g. swimming pool fencing and self-closing, self-latching gates.

### Changes to Legislation

Legislative measures can have significant impact on injury prevention, especially when combined with strong enforcement e.g. home swimming pool barrier inspections.

### Advocacy

Advocates can influence decision makers on important health issues through accessing media and gaining public support. Ensuring that the media has the correct information is crucial and can be influential in gaining public support.

### Effectiveness of Strategies

Royal Life Saving continues to evaluate its programs and use the latest information to ensure the effectiveness of its programs.

“It's more than handing out brochures!”



## DELIGHTS AND DANGERS OF WATER

Australians have a love of the water and this is reflected in our recreational pursuits with tens of millions of people each year visiting beaches, swimming pools, lakes, rivers and dams to undertake a variety of aquatic activities. Unfortunately this interaction with water has a down side and every year approximately 300 people drown in Australia. Children under the age of 5 are over-represented in these figures.

With the cost of a drowning death ranging from an estimated \$370,000 to \$610,000 per incident, drowning deaths are on an average costing the Australian community between an estimated \$98 million and \$161 million each year.

Water should be seen as a fun and enjoyable environment, especially for children, as it can assist in a child's early physical and intellectual development. The ability to safely enjoy water continues to benefit us at all stages of our lives. Positive aquatic experiences begin from birth - bath time is the ideal introduction to the aquatic environment. Parents and carers can encourage children to feel comfortable with water by playing and making bath time and other water based activities fun.

**The most important message about children and water safety is to always supervise children at all times around water.**

It is important that supervision is active (that is close, constant and focused) and performed by a responsible adult. Encourage children to always explore water with an adult by saying "let's go together".

Parents and carers also have a responsibility to teach children appropriate water safety messages and practices. Keep children away from dangerous sources of water and provide a safe place to play.

Drowning is the major cause of death of preventable death in children under 5 years of age. Prolonged submersion can also cause serious and permanent injury. These incidents can be significantly reduced by all of us becoming aware of the potential hazards around swimming pools, learning resuscitation and participating in water awareness programs.

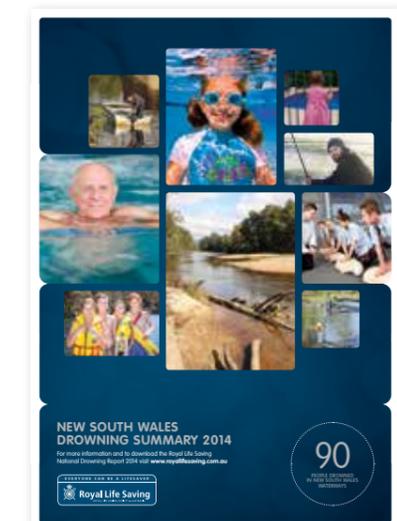
For every drowning death there are three hospitalisations due to near drowning. Victims of near drowning can experience serious injuries including permanent neurological impairment. Near drowning and the long term disabilities that can result have serious impacts upon families and communities.

**Drowning is preventable**

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Drowning is one of the leading causes of preventable death in children under 5 years of age
- A child under 5 years of age drowned on average every week in Australia over the last decade
- For every drowning death it is estimated that approximately 3 children are admitted to hospital as a result of an immersion incident. For every 5 children admitted to hospital following immersion, 1 child is left with potentially severe or persisting consequences of drowning (i.e. neurological impairment)
- For children under 5, home swimming pools are the most common site in which drowning occurs
- Children who drowned in home swimming pools were predominately residents or invited guests of a relative or friend
- The majority of households, in which children under 5 years of age drowned, had fencing which was inadequate, improperly maintained or used improperly (e.g. gate left propped open)
- 2 out of 3 children who drown are boys
- Children drown all year round unlike other age groups which tend to drown more frequently in summer

NSW Drowning Report 2014



## WHY DO CHILDREN DROWN?

### Children drown for a range of reasons.

Factors related to:

#### PARENTS AND CARERS

- Absence or lack of supervision
- Parental busy times such as when family routine is disrupted (i.e. changeover time when other parent comes home, meal preparation, feeding of animals, parents are ill, when visitors call and/or when bathing other children)
- Underestimating young children's capacity to gain access to areas where parental supervision is necessary
- Unrealistic expectations of young children's behaviour and self-control
- False sense of security when each parent or carer mistakenly assumes that the other is supervising the toddler
- New environments – not knowing about and being prepared for new risks and hazards
- Parents being unprepared when swimming with child (e.g. leave child to fetch forgotten towel)
- False belief that the presence of another child or children reduces the threat of a child drowning. Other children may not appreciate that a drowning child is in danger. They may assume the child is playing and not alert adults
- False belief that pool safety devices such as retractable pool ladders, pool alarms, pool covers, baby bath aids or flotation devices provide adequate protection
- Lack of knowledge of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and/or apprehension to administer. Have a go, push and blow and as soon as possible call 000!
- Complacency or comfort zone around the home and therefore not being as vigilant. Children commonly drown at home.

#### THE CHILD

- Babies have limited strength, no judgment or physical coordination to recognise dangerous situations or get themselves out of trouble
- Young children are attracted to water
- A young child is not able to understand the concept of danger and therefore may have difficulty in understanding that water could also cause harm
- Children do not understand the consequences of falling into water
- Infants and toddlers generally are not coordinated well enough to swim and breathe at the same time, so they cannot be taught to swim effectively
- Young children who have basic swimming skills are not water safe or 'drownproof', as they may panic or forget their swimming skills in an emergency or unfamiliar environment
- Very young children are susceptible to drowning because they are top heavy. A young child leaning forward to look into water or reach for an object easily topples over and drowns even in just a few inches of water
- Childhood drowning is a silent event as children do not usually cry out for help. A drowning child may not cough or splash. A child swallows water, sinks and loses consciousness in less than a minute. Drowning happens quickly and silently.
- Illness (e.g. epilepsy)
- Acute injury (e.g. being knocked unconscious)
- Disobeying parent or carer's instructions
- Children seeking out water
- Children's mobility improving and speed of movement increasing as children age and develop
- Being attracted to colourful toys left in the pool or floating on water.

#### SWIMMING POOLS

- Absence of a safety barrier such as no fence around a home swimming pool.
- Ineffective fence or gate – possibly due to a lack of maintenance
- The temperature of the water (e.g. when the temperature of water is different to what the child is used to this may upset or confuse the child)
- The fence as a psychological barrier – when parents reinforce to children that the barrier is there for their safety and not to be climbed upon.





## BACKYARD SWIMMING POOL ACTIONS

There are 4 key actions to prevent a child from drowning.

**There are:**

Supervise, Restrict Access, Water Awareness and Resuscitate.

These strategies are not to be used in isolation and should form part of a web of strategies. Therefore if one line of defence fails there are more prevention measures working together to prevent your child from drowning.

## SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD

**Always supervise your child within arms' reach**

Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your children all of the time, when they are in, on or around the water. Supervision is not an occasional glance while you are busy with other activities, but being in constant visual contact with your child.

Depending on your child's age, you may even need to be in the water and within arms' reach at all times. For older children, be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency.

Parents are busy and often try to do many things at once to save time. But when you multi-task you can too easily become distracted and not give your full attention to the safety of your children.

Older children too are not equipped to deal with the responsibility of supervising children. It is an adult's job and children of any age should never be burdened with the responsibility.

Royal Life Saving believes that one of the smartest ways to supervise children is to have a designated supervisor. Responsibility can be rotated and if there is a large number of children to supervise, leave an adult stationed at each different place where the children will play to monitor that area.

**Active supervision has four key components:**

- **Be Prepared** – Always make sure you have everything ready for going swimming e.g. towels, dry clothes etc
- **Be Close** – Always be within arms' reach of your child
- **All Of Your Attention**– Focus all of your attention on your child and watch, talk and play with them when they are in the water
- **All Of The Time** – You should never leave your child alone in the water, nor should they be left in the care of an older child
- If you must leave the swimming pool area where your child is swimming, take your child with you
- Setting up rules and boundaries for children are also useful

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## CLOSE / CONSTANT / FOCUSED



## BE WATER AWARE

### Introduce your child to water

Water awareness is a broad term that encapsulates several different strategies used to reduce the risk of a child drowning. It involves educating children about the risks and hazards different water bodies pose, instilling rules such as no going near water without an adult and using bath time or an adult getting in the pool with the child to help familiarise them with water in preparation for swimming lessons when they are a little older.

Helping your child learn water familiarisation skills can be fun for adult and child alike.

- Water Awareness classes such as Royal Life Saving's Swim and Survive Wonder Program provide a fun way to experience the water and teach safe water practices and rules
- Be aware that water awareness classes are exactly that, they do not aim to teach children how to swim and will not 'drownproof' them
- When at a new place, check out aquatic locations with your children and discuss different hazards that might be present
- Introduce rules to your children when around water, such as no going near the water without an adult
- When at parties where a swimming pool is present, talk with other parents to ensure they are aware of the need to supervise and uphold rules around water. Better still, have a designated supervisor watching the water who passes the responsibility to another adult if they have to leave the area

### Actions for Parents and Carers (✓)

- Child enrolled in a water awareness class such as the Swim & Survive Wonder Program
- If your house has a pool, using pool to teach basic water awareness at home
- Active adult supervision maintained when child in, on, or around water
- 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 parties have a designated child supervisor near water actively supervising
- Parents at parties near water upholding rules.

### Swim & Survive Wonder Program

#### A typical Water Awareness Class includes:

##### Getting wet

Enter and exit the water safely with carer

##### Breathing

Experience the water on the head and body

##### Going Underwater

With instructor guidance and using cue words, undertake submersion preparation

##### Staying Afloat

Display comfort when cradled on back

##### Keeping Balance

Be gently rocked, turned and towed through the water

##### Kick and Arm Action

Be encouraged to splash the arms and kick the legs

##### Parent Education

Keep Watch drowning prevention strategies; Supervise, Restrict Access, Water Awareness and Resuscitate.

## RESTRICT ACCESS TO WATER

### Provide Barriers to Water Locations

- Statistics show that the most common location where drowning occurs for children under 5 years of age is the home pool or spa
- Stop children drowning in your swimming pool or spa by installing a fence that meets Australian Standard AS 1926
- Fencing that isolates your pool from the house is the most effective method
- Once a fence and self-closing, self-latching gate are installed, they must be kept in good working order.
- Check your fence and gate now, and then on a regular basis. Download a checklist now from [www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au](http://www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au)
- Remember, one of the most common areas of weakness in a pool fence is a weak or faulty gate latch. Are the latches working properly? Does it close first time, every time? Check the gate and fence now
- Is there anything leaning against the swimming pool fence which a child could use to climb over the fence? If so, take it away now
- Inflatable pools need to be fenced if they are able to be filled to a depth of 300mm or more
- The fence can also act not only as a physical barrier but also as a psychological barrier when parents reprimand children for climbing the fence

### Actions for Parents and Carers (✓)

- All water bodies, including inflatable pools and wading pools, over 300mm in depth fenced
- Gate installed that self-closes and self-latches
- Fence and gate regularly maintained. Checklist from [www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au](http://www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au) completed
- Objects leaning against or near the pool fence that a child could use to climb over removed
- Children reprimanded if climbing on pool fence

## LEARN RESUSCITATION

### Resuscitation is a skill for life

Parents with CPR skills have saved the lives of children in the past. As a parent or carer you are often the first one on the scene in an emergency and can offer vital assistance until emergency help arrives.

These few minutes of help could be the difference between life and death for someone you love.

- Resuscitation is a skill for life
- Have a go. A rapid response is the best response in an emergency
- Any action is better than no action
- CPR training is easily accessible and should be update regularly.



### CPR – A Real Life Saver

In February 2008, knowing CPR helped one husband and wife save their two children from drowning. With their parents 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 their parent's credit knowing CPR with saving the lives of their boys.

Please note: All Swimming Pool Owners are required to have a CPR Chart displayed with the pool area.

## FAMILIARISE / DEVELOP / EDUCATE



## FENCE / GATE / MAINTAIN



## LEARN / UPDATE / ACT



## COMMUNITY ACTION

Councils and community workers can play a vital role in reducing the risk of toddler drowning through a range of awareness raising actions. Below are a range of actions using advocacy techniques, the media and educational activities.

### Media

Contact the local community newspaper to run a series of articles relating to drowning prevention.

### Action:

- Work in partnership with Royal Life Saving and develop a media release for local circulation.

### Education

- Conduct education talks with parents and carers of children under 5 years of age.
- Create a drowning prevention awareness display at the local shopping centre, recreational centre or community centre.
- Provide parents and carers with the information brochures, fact sheets, CPR fridge magnets and direct them to [www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au) for further information.
- Conduct education talks to preschool teachers, play groups, day care centres and family day care.
- Conduct education talks to community groups, e.g. Country Women's Association, Rotary and Lions Clubs.

### Action:

- Invite the local recreation centre or swimming pool manager to talk to parents and carers about water awareness classes held in their centre.
- Encourage parents and carers to enrol/teach young children water awareness.
- Contact your local Royal Life Saving branch or download water awareness related resources from [www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au)
- Encourage parents to enrol in a resuscitation course and to have a resuscitation booklet/poster displayed in a prominent position in their home or a CPR chart displayed near the pool.
- Contact your local Royal Life Saving branch to conduct resuscitation classes for parents and carers
- Encourage parents and carers to undertake audits/checklists and make appropriate changes. These checklists can be found at [www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au) on the relevant fact sheets.
- Create a demonstration 'Water Safe House' or 'Child Safe Play Area' for parents to view.
- Ask large community focused companies e.g. real estate agents, sporting goods stores, supermarkets and banks, to put a Home Pool Safety Facts sheet on their notice boards to remind customers of important drowning prevention messages and events.

## FACT SHEETS

There are a range of fact sheets available from [www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au) on topics such as supervision, resuscitation, water awareness and farm water safety.

Each fact sheet is designed to provide answers to commonly asked questions, a checklist to help prevent drowning and real life examples of the issues discussed. These fact sheets are a valuable resource that you can print off and give to parents or direct parents to the website.



Available from  
[www.bepoolsafe.com.au](http://www.bepoolsafe.com.au)



## LIFESTAGES

### 0 – 12 MONTHS OF AGE

#### Always actively supervise children around water

Every month 1 child between the ages of 0 and 12 months drowns in Australia. Three quarters of these drowning deaths occur around the home, in bathtubs, backyard swimming pools, buckets and eskies.

Bath time poses one of the highest risks of drowning for infants with 35 children drowning in bathtubs and spa baths in the past nine years. A lack of adequate adult supervision is the main cause of drowning deaths in this life stage.

#### Actions to prevent your child 0-12 months from drowning include:

- Always actively supervise children around water
- Ensure you have everything needed for bathing before entering the bathroom e.g. towels, clothes
- Bath water should be kept to a minimum depth
- Children are not to be left alone or in the care of an older child while in the bath or around water
- Supervising adult should always maintain physical contact with children in or around water
- Learn CPR. Enrol in a course or update your skills
- Create a safe play area to restrict a child's access to water around the home
- Empty buckets and containers that can hold water



### 1 – 3 YEARS OF AGE

#### Always actively supervise children around water

Every year 29 children between the ages of 12 and 36 months drown in Australia. Many occur in a few seconds when parents and carers are distracted. Active adult supervision is essential in protecting your child from drowning.

Over 50% of all drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools posing the greatest drowning risk. Children commonly access the pool through a faulty fence, a propped open gate or by climbing on objects such as a table or BBQ.

#### Actions to prevent your child 12-36 months from drowning include:

- Always actively supervise children around water
- Supervising adult should have physical contact or be within arms' reach of the child
- Ensure pool fence is correctly installed, regularly maintained & gate is never left open
- Create a safe play area to restrict a child's access to water around the home
- Establish simple rules such as no going near water without an adult
- Enrol your child in water familiarisation lessons
- Learn CPR. Enrol in a course or update your skills
- Empty buckets and containers that can hold water around the home.



### 3 – 5 YEARS OF AGE

#### Always actively supervise children around water

Ten children between the ages of 3 and 5 years drown every year in Australia. Almost 50% of all drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools. Boys in this age group are twice as likely to drown than girls.

Restricting access to water, particularly in homes with swimming pools or easy access to water is vital. Correctly install and regularly maintain pool fencing and create a safe play area near the home. These years are a good time to enrol in learn to swim classes.

#### Actions to prevent your 3-5 year old from drowning include:

- Always actively supervise children around water
- Supervising adult should always be within arms' reach of the child in and around water
- Ensure pool fence is correctly installed, regularly maintained & gate is never left open
- Create a safe play area to restrict a child's access to water around the home
- Enrol your child in water familiarisation lessons and learn to swim classes
- Establish simple rules such as no going near water without an adult
- Learn CPR. Enrol in a course or update your skills.



### 6 – 10 YEARS OF AGE

#### Constant active adult supervision is required

Every year 8 children between the ages of 6 and 10 years drown in Australia. 68% of children who drown in this age group are boys. As children increasingly engage with their peers, they still require a high level of supervision from parents and carers. Children can overestimate their own ability and underestimate risks to their safety.

Ages 6 to 10 are perfect for further developing swimming and water safety skills with qualified instructors and practicing those skills outside of lessons.

#### Actions to prevent your 6-10 year old from drowning include:

- Constant active supervision is required
- Be prepared to get wet and enter the water
- Continue learn to swim lessons with qualified instructors
- Children to gain supervised experience in different aquatic environments
- Adults to model safe behaviours around water for children
- Learn CPR. Enrol in a course or update your skills



11 – 16 YEARS OF AGE

**Establish rules around water**

Every year nine teenagers between the ages of 11 and 16 years drown in Australia. Over two thirds are male.

In this age group, teenagers become more independent and supervision may also be provided by peers. A strong urge to comply with the morals and behaviours of their peer group can lead to risk taking behaviour. The influence of drugs and alcohol can also increase a teenager's risk of drowning during these years.

**Actions to prevent your 11 to 16 year old from drowning include:**

- Parents to discourage risk taking behaviour around water
- Teenagers to learn survival and rescue skills
- Parents to discuss dangers of alcohol and drugs with aquatic activity
- Parents to continue to model and reinforce safe behaviours around water
- Teenagers to learn CPR and emergency skills



**CHILD DROWNING - Fact Or Fiction?**

**Child drowning is preventable.**

Unfortunately there are a number of myths about children and water. The aim of this fact or fiction is to give parents the real information about child drowning in order for them to more effectively prevent it.

**Fiction:** Children are easy to supervise and I do not need to modify my strategies as they age.

**Fact:** Children develop quickly and at different stages their abilities can change quite rapidly. As children grow they become more mobile and like to explore. This may mean they begin climbing over barriers that are designed to keep them away from water.

**Fiction:** Children are at a lesser risk of drowning because of their small physical build.

**Fact:** Young children are at risk because of their physical build. They are 'top heavy' and more prone to falling into water due to a lack of balance.

**Fiction:** Children are aware of the dangers water poses to them and will take care around water.

**Fact:** Children do not understand or perceive the hazards that water presents to them. They have no real sense of danger and require a high level of supervision.

**Fiction:** Young children can be left in the supervision of older children.

**Fact:** Never leave children in the care of older children. Older children may not perceive the amount of danger a young child may be in and may confuse drowning for playing or lack the attention levels needed to supervise correctly.

**Fiction:** Water needs to be reasonably deep for children to drown in it.

**Fact:** Children only need a small amount of water to drown in. Water that is deep enough to cover their nose and mouth is enough for a child to drown in.

**Fiction:** Toddlers are naturally docile and do not like to explore around water.

**Fact:** Toddlers are a naturally inquisitive group and are attracted to water. Children under 5 years of age are especially at risk because of their natural curiosity about their environment.

**Fiction:** When children are drowning they will make a lot of noise and cry and call for help.

**Fact:** This is a common misconception, when children drown it is silent.

**Drowning is preventable**





## ROYAL LIFE SAVING NSW CONTACT DETAILS:

To ensure we stay in tune with the needs of the diverse communities that make up our aquatic facilities, Royal Life Saving maintains a network of offices throughout NSW.

### For more information contact:

Sydney	T: 02 9634 3700 E: <a href="mailto:nsw@royalnsw.com.au">nsw@royalnsw.com.au</a>
Hunter	T: 02 4929 5600 E: <a href="mailto:hunter@royalnsw.com.au">hunter@royalnsw.com.au</a>
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