9 Myths Of Drowning

1. **Is drowning really a problem?**
   Yes. Drowning is the leading cause of death among children ages 1-4 in California. A residential pool is 14 times more likely to cause a death than an automobile.

2. **Don't more children die in open water than in pools?**
   No. 50% of deaths by drowning, for children ages 1-4 occur in residential pools, spas, or hot tubs.

3. **Isn't it more important to have a locked gate to keep neighbors out?**
   No. 65% of the children were at their own home at the time of the incident. 46% of the children were last seen safe inside the house just before the drowning. 72% had direct access to the pool once they were outside the house.

4. **Isn't it just parental neglect that causes drowning?**
   No. According to the U.S. CPSC Drowning Study, conscientious parents who understand the need for supervision were almost always nearby.

5. **Won't swimming lessons protect a child from drowning?**
   No. Swimming lessons do not guarantee that a child will be prepared for a drowning, or near drowning, situation.

6. **Isn't constant supervision enough to prevent drowning?**
   No. We recommended "layers" of protection which include a well-maintained non-climbable fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate, alarm systems, powered safety pool covers, and self-closing, self-latching doors with automatic sliding door closers.

7. **Is there any proof that fences or safety barriers work?**
   Yes. In studies conducted in Australia and New Zealand, the findings suggest that adequate, four sided pool fencing reduced drownings by 80%. Studies in Arizona demonstrated a 50% reduction.

8. **Won't fences detract from the aesthetics of pools?**
   No. There are several kinds of fences to choose from which meet safety requirements and there are also alternatives such as an approved safety cover.

9. **Do pool owners without young children need to install protective barriers?**
   Yes. 35% of residential drownings are not at the home of the victim.

VENTURA ICC CHAPTER
INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL®

Saving Lives, One Building at a Time

http://www.iccventura.org

KIDS AREN'T DROWN PROOF
DPF
SAVE A LIFE!
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Make

Drowning Prevention

Pool Priority #1

Save A Life

The Ventura Chapter of ICC in cooperation with the California Building Officials organization and the Drowning Prevention Foundation are providing this handout in an effort to increase awareness to the hazards associated with owning a swimming pool. A child can drown in less than two minutes and there is usually no warning such as screams or splashing. Please take the time to carefully read and consider all of the information provided.

Specific pool safety features were required as part of the permit to construct your pool. Those features plus a diligent attitude toward pool safety will help save lives.

Safety Guidelines
(PARTIAL LIST)

In addition to the pool safety features installed as part of the permit to construct your pool the following guidelines will help insure child safety.

- Never leave a child alone near water to answer the phone, the doorbell, go to the bathroom, attend to another child or attend to household chores, even for a few seconds.
- Keep a constant eye on young children playing in or near any body of water, wading pool, public pool, bathtub or lake. At large gatherings, designate an adult to watch children at play, and while in pool.
- Fence your pool on all four sides with a barrier that is at least 5 feet high. Move lawn chairs, tables and other potential climbing aids away from the fence to help keep children out.
- Any gate or door leading to the pool area should be self-closing and self-latching, opening outward away from the pool, with the latch placed on the pool side out of reach.
- Install panic alarms on all house doors and windows leading to the pool area, automatic sliding door closers and automatic safety cover over the pool. Completely remove cover before children are allowed in pool.
- Drain off water that accumulates on top of the pool cover. A child can drown in as little as two inches of water.
- Keep reaching and throwing aids, such as poles and life preservers, on both sides of the pool.
- All non-swimmers should always wear approved personal flotation devices when they are near water.
- Swimming lessons do not insure safety. A child who falls into water unexpectedly may panic and forget his swimming skills.
- It is crucial that you and all of your child's caregivers can swim and know how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in an emergency. Immediate CPR could prevent death or massive brain damage. Contact Red Cross for CPR training.

Drowning is the Leading Cause of death, disability, and injury for children under 5 years of age in California, and the second leading killer of youngsters nationwide.

The number of young, severely brain-damaged near-drowning victims has increased rapidly in recent years. Residential care of these victims averages $220,000 annually per child, and is the leading cause of admission to state hospitals. At time of printing there were over 600 individuals maintained in state facilities.

A Drowning Happens in Seconds

It could happen to you! A diligent father switches his attention to the phone while his child sinks lifelessly to the bottom of the swimming pool. A normally attentive mother is cooking in the kitchen, her youngster falls into the neighbor's pool. A conscientious babysitter is distracted by the needs of one of her many charges, another wanders off and drowns.

Obviously supervision is critically important, but it's virtually impossible to supervise small children every minute of every day. That is why parents and caregivers must provide multiple layers of protection-pool fencing, self-closing, and self-locking gates, automatic sliding door closers, pool alarms, automatic safety covers, as well as constant supervision.

About the Drowning Prevention Foundation (DPF)

DPF's mission is to prevent the tragedy of drownings through the use of public information, education and policy change. DPF is a non-profit, community-based organization which was established in 1984. It is recognized both locally and nationally as the leading expert in drowning prevention methods, technology, policy and activities.

DPF's activities include working to strengthen local, state, and national legislation on pool fencing, providing technical assistance to other local, state, and national coalitions and agencies; producing and distributing educational materials on drowning prevention; and advising parents and caretakers on improving the safety of backyard pools, spas and hot tubs.

If you would like more information on pool safety or would like to be involved with the DPF mission please contact **Nadina Riggsbee** at **707-747-0191** or email nriggsbee@comcast.net.

About California Building Officials

California Building Officials is a non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting public health and safety in building construction through responsible legislation, education, and building code development.

For pool safety requirements specific to your city or county contact your local building department. Your local building department can provide information on all aspects of building construction and can be contacted as noted on the back of this informational flyer.