

LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS



Water Safety

Drowning claims the lives of nearly 3,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children four years old and younger have the highest death rate due to drowning. Most drowning and near-drowning incidents happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub.

Safety Tips

- Never leave a child alone near water: on the beach, at a pool, or in the bathtub. If you must leave, take your child with you.
- Kids don't drown only in pools. Bathtubs, buckets, toilets, and hot tubs present drowning dangers as well.
- Enroll children over age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."
- Always follow posted safety precautions when visiting water parks.
- If you're visiting a public pool, keep an eye on your kids. Lifeguards aren't babysitters.
- Teach your children these four key swimming rules:
 1. Always swim with a buddy.
 2. Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
 3. Don't push or jump on others.
 4. Be prepared for an emergency.
- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.
- Always use approved personal flotation devices (life jackets).
- Don't underestimate the power of water. Even rivers and lakes can have undertows.

LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS

- Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

To reduce your child's risk of drowning

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury related death among children ages 1 - 14. It can happen very quickly and in less than 1 inch (2.5 centimeters) of water, so filled bathtubs, swimming pools, wading pools, hot tubs, and even buckets of water and sinks can be dangerous.

Home

- Never leave a small child unattended in the bath. If you must answer the telephone or door, don't rely on an older sibling to watch the child, bring the younger child with you.
- Never leave a small child unattended near a bucket filled with any amount of water or other liquid.
- Never use a bathtub seat with suction cups. The seat can overturn and flip a baby headfirst into the water.
- Install a toilet-lid locking device or keep bathroom doors closed at all times. (Or you may want to install a doorknob cover.)

Pool

- Never leave your children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment. An adult who knows CPR should actively supervise children at all times.
- Practice 'touch supervision' with children younger than 5 years. This means that the adult is within an arm's length of the child at all times.
- If you are planning a pool party, consider hiring a certified lifeguard to supervise those who will be in the pool.
- 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. Install a fence at least 4 feet high around the pool. This fence will completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches higher than your children's reach.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.
- Do not use air-filled "swimming aids" as a substitute for approved life vests.
- 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 so they can't get back into it.
- A power safety cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) may add to the protection of your children

LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS

but should not be used in place of the fence between your house and the pool. Even fencing around your pool and using a power safety cover will not prevent all drowning.

Drain Entrapment occurs when part of a child's body becomes attached to a drain because of the powerful suction of a pool or hot tub filtration system. The powerful suction can trap a child underwater or cause internal injuries. It can also occur when a child's hair, swimsuit or jewelry becomes entangled in the drain. In 2007, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act made it illegal to manufacture, distribute or sell drain covers that do not adhere to the standards for anti-entrapment safety set by the Consumer Product and Safety Commission.

- Warn your children about the dangers of drain entrapment, and teach them never to play near a pool drain, with or without a cover.
- Pin up long hair when in the water and remove loose parts of swimsuits and loose jewelry that can get ensnared.
- Equip pools and hot tubs with an anti-entrapment drain cover and an approved safety vacuum release system and regularly check that drain covers are secure and have no cracks. Flat drain covers can be replaced with dome-shaped ones.
- Be aware of public wading pools with missing or broken drain covers. Small children have direct access to the bottom drain in wading pools and sitting on open drains can cause serious internal organ damage.

Remember, teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water. Most young children who drown in swimming pools were last seen in the home, had only been missing from sight for a matter of minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time. There is no substitute for active adult supervision to prevent drowning.