



WATER

SAFETY

Being at the beach or at a pool can be the best of times in the summer.

Unfortunately drowning and injuries are a common occurrence with young and old alike. Most can be prevented by following simple safety rules. Whether you are at a beach or a pool there are usually rules posted. Following these rules can help ensure a safe, fun time. They are there to protect you and help keep the pool clean and sanitary.

Never run when in a pool area. The area is nearly always slippery do to splashing and water dripping when people exit the pool. Take special care when entering or exiting a pool. If there is a handrail, be sure to use it.

Whether a pool, lake or swimming hole check the area before diving or jumping in. First time in, check the area by walking in and checking for rocks, submerged logs, toys or shallow areas. Diving in can cause severe injuries if you hit an obstruction you were not aware of.

Stay within your limits and abilities. Do not swim out until you start to tire. Remember you have to be able to cover the same distance coming back. At beaches always stay within roped off areas and marker buoys and swim parallel to shore if possible. Use the buddy system even if there is a lifeguard present. Watch out for each other.

Beware of hazards in pools and hot tubs such as suction lines and drains. Water is filtered thus it is suctioned out of the pools and tubs. Never put your head under water in whirlpools or hot tubs as hair can be caught in the lines



and your head could be held underwater. Wear a bathing cap or tie your hair up or braid it to prevent accidents. Small children's arms and legs can also be caught in a drain that has a poor cover over it. If a cover is missing do not use the tub or pool until a proper cover is in place.

Play safely when in pools or at the beach. Wrestling or tumbling around could lead to your head hitting cement sides, bottoms, pool decks or rocks in a lake. Drowning can occur very quickly.

Alcohol and water don't mix. Alcohol slows your reflexes and affects your stability easily leading to slips or falls. It can make you drowsy, especially in a hot tub, and that can be dangerous.

Protect your children. Never leave them alone near any water for even a moment. Small children and infants should always be within arms reach. Smaller children should wear government approved life jackets and older kids should be taught the "buddy" system. Teach them to check for hidden dangers at a beach such as sudden drop offs and hidden logs or rocks.

Take a first aid course to prepare you should an emergency arise. Make sure your children are wearing waterproof sunscreen even on days when it is not too hot or is partially cloudy. Take breaks in the shade.

Look after your pool and keep it safe for people of all ages. Fence off the pool area according to local bylaws for fence height. Ensure there is a lockable gate that small children

cannot open and ensure it is locked when the pool is not in use or being supervised by a responsible adult.

Keep the pool clean to help prevent bacteria and germs. Use recommended sanitizing chemicals and follow the directions on the chemical containers.

Follow the operation and maintenance instructions for your pool or hot tub especially about the circulation systems.

Do not allow food or drink in the pool or hot tub. Spills will mean extra cleaning.

Do not allow glass dishes or drink containers in the pool area. A broken container can lead to a serious injury and if broken glass enters the water the pool or hot tub will have to be drained to allow a thorough cleaning.

Enjoy the summer and play safe.

Bill White has been associated with work place safety committees for 25 years in the government and the private sectors

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