

## Pool Safety Tips

Having a swimming pool is a dream come true for many, but it also comes with responsibilities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, very young children ages 1-4 are at the greatest risk of drowning. In most cases, the little ones were at home and had slipped outside and into the pool without anyone noticing.

Even older children and adults can be at risk, not only for drowning, but for slips and falls on wet surfaces. Pool safety advocates say it's important to build "layers of protection" around your home swimming pool. If someone gets past one safety system, a backup can help prevent a tragedy — and protect you as a homeowner. Here are some additional tips to follow:

- Install a fence that's at least 4 feet tall with a locking gate around the pool.
- When the pool is not in use, remove ladders and accessories, as well as any toys or flotation devices that a small child might attempt to reach for. Placing a solid cover on the surface can provide a barrier to accidental stumbles and falls for very young children (while keeping your water free of debris).
- When children are in the pool, a responsible adult should watch them at all times. Never leave them unattended around a pool – even for a minute.
- Inexperienced swimmers should wear a life vest.
- Invest in pool safety equipment, such as a life hook, life rings and safety rope. In addition, post safety rules and be consistent with enforcing the rules with both your family members and your guests.
- Have everyone in the house take first aid and CPR courses.
- Consider a motion-activated alarm that alerts you when someone opens the gate and enters the water when you're not outside.
- If you have very young children, install a back door alarm to alert you should they slip outside unnoticed. You can also purchase special bracelets for kids that alert you when it gets wet.
- Limit alcohol use around the pool area, as drinking can affect balance, coordination and judgment. In fact, drinking was a factor in half the swimming pool drowning deaths of teenagers and adults, according to the CDC.