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DROWNING

- More than one in five fatal drowning victims are children 14 and younger. For every child who dies from drowning, another four received emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries.
- Nonfatal drownings can cause brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities including memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning (e.g., permanent vegetative state).

Who is most at risk?

- Males are much more likely than females to die from unintentional drownings in the United States.
- A study from the Centers for Disease Control found that for all ages, American Indians/Alaska Natives had the highest drowning rate, twice that of whites; the rate for African Americans was 1.4 times the rate for whites. Drowning rates for black children were significantly higher than those for whites and Hispanics at every age from five years through 18 years. The greatest disparity was seen in swimming pool deaths, where the drowning death rate for black children and teens ages 5-19 years was 5.5 times the rate for whites. (Centers for Disease Control, May 2014).
- Factors such as the physical environment (e.g., access to swimming pools) and a combination of social and cultural issues (e.g., fear of drowning; choosing or not choosing recreational water-related activities) may contribute to these differences in drowning rates.

Prevention Tips

- Never leave a child unattended in and around water. A child can drown in as little as one inch of water in the same time it takes to answer the doorbell or telephone.
- Never leave a child unsupervised in or around a swimming pool. Play flotation devices and waterwings are not a substitute for a life jacket or supervision. CPR training is suggested for pool owners and water enthusiasts.
- Install four-sided isolation fencing, at least five feet high, equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates, that completely surround the swimming pool. The fencing should prevent direct access from the house and yard.
- When boating, always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD. It is estimated that 85% of boating-related drownings could have been saved if the victim had been wearing a PFD. Air-filled "swimming aides" are not considered safety devices and are not a substitute for PFDs.

Children under age 10 are required to wear a life jacket while boating on Minnesota waters



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(not when the boat is tied up at a dock or permanent mooring).

To learn more about the life jacket law for kids in Minnesota, visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety
www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/pfd_childlaw.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/pfd_childlaw.html).

For additional information see the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Boat and Water Safety Page at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/index.html>.

Acknowledgments:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

[Safe Kids Worldwide](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



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