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POOL/SPA SAFETY

Water recreation provides hours of enjoyment and exercise for adults and children during the summer, but drowning is a significant cause of unintentional injury deaths.

The majority of drownings occur in residential swimming pools and open water. Adults watching children near water should avoid becoming distracted (put down the book and the cell phone) and watch children the entire time they are near water, because drowning is often silent, quick, and can happen even when help is nearby.

A hidden danger for children (and adult swimmers) at swimming pools and spas is the risk of drain entrapment. Entrapment occurs when part of a person's body becomes attached to a drain as a result of the powerful suction of the water circulation system (pumps). Death or serious injury can occur when the force of the suction overpowers a child's ability to disengage from the drain and rise to the surface of the water.

The Abigail Taylor pool safety bill, passed by the 2008 Minnesota Legislature, established standards for new and existing public pools and requires daily physical inspections of drain covers and grates. It also requires all public pools that are less than four feet deep to have drainage systems designed to prevent suction from blockage. The new safety standards apply to pools at health clubs, parks, apartment buildings and hotels.

Simple safety tips to keep you and your family safe in and around the pool:

- Always actively supervise children in and around water. Lifeguards are not babysitters. Never leave a child alone near water.
- Always follow posted safety precautions when visiting water parks, hotel and community pools.
- If you're in a group, appoint a designated "water watcher," taking turns with other adults.
- While supervising, stay alert and avoid distractions like reading or the telephone.
- Teach children to swim.
- Teach children how to tread water, float, and get out of the pool.
- Tell children to stay away from pool and hot tub drains.
- Tie up long hair securely to guard against drain entanglement.
- Don't rely on water wings or other inflatable toys. If your child can't swim use a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket and stay within an arm's reach.
- Never dive in to water less than nine feet deep.
- If you find a drain cover that is loose, broken or missing, notify the owner or operator and do not enter the pool or hot tub.
- If you have a pool or spa, make sure it has four-sided fencing with self-closing and self-latching gates. Go to www.poolssafety.gov for a list of certified covers and details



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on the Pool and Spa Safety Act.

Learn [first aid and CPR](#). Always have a [first aid kit](#) and emergency phone contacts handy.

- Look for lifesaving equipment by the pool.

(Source: National Safety Council)



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