

General Water Safety

Water safety must be a priority

Canadian Red Cross, leader in drowning research, swimming and water safety, is deeply concerned about the number of drowning and near-drowning incidents this summer and is **strongly** urging Canadians to make safety a priority.

Drowning deaths are preventable. The Canadian Red Cross encourages people to keep the following tips in mind to ensure being around the water is not only fun but safe as well.

How to avoid water-related injuries:

- Regardless of the location, ensure children are supervised; whether at home or on vacation. Adult supervision is the best protection for children – even for those who can swim.
- Ensure that your backyard pool is fully fenced with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- When not using your home pool, clear all toys out of the water and away from the edge. These can often tempt children to the water's edge.
- Ensure you have emergency equipment including a first aid kit and a phone in the immediate pool area.
- When boating, ensure everyone in the boat has their lifejacket on and fastened.
- Don't consume alcohol before or during swimming or boating activities.
- **Be cautious about swimming in currents**, and know what to do if you get into trouble.
- **Get trained** through swimming and water safety lessons; get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card if you operate a boat; know how to respond in an emergency by taking first aid lessons.

Lifejacket safety checklist:

- Is it Canadian-approved?
Will it support the person it was made for?
Are all the snaps, belts, ties, tapes and/or zippers on your lifejacket or PFD in good condition?
- Is it easy to put on and take off?
- Can you move your arms freely when wearing it?
- Does it let you bend at the waist?
- Can you see the ground at your feet and walk over obstacles easily?
- Does it keep your head above water?
- Relax in the water face down. Does your lifejacket roll you to a face-up position?
- Can you swim and manoeuvre easily in the water?
- Have you attached a whistle to your flotation device?

Water Safety Facts

- Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for Canadian children aged one to four.

- For every toddler who dies from drowning, it is estimated there are three to five additional near drownings, which require hospitalization.
- In nearly half of the infant and toddler drownings, the victims were alone.
- A small child can drown in only a few inches of water – enough to cover the mouth and nose.
- Drowning can occur in less time than it takes to read this safety message.
- The most common location for infant drownings is the bathtub.
- Home swimming pools account for 38% of toddler drownings.
- Since 1991, only 4% of reported toddler drownings were in pools with self-closing and self-latching gates.
- If all home pools were equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates, nearly all toddler pool drownings and about one-third of all toddler drownings could be eliminated.