

Pool & Spa Emergency Procedures For Infants & Children

This focuses on guidelines related to preventing drowning accidents and dealing with emergencies related to infants and children. It is designed to give you general guidelines, but it is not intended as, nor can it fully substitute for "hands-on" training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and other emergency procedures.

All family members who reside in a home with a swimming pool, spa or hot tub should become familiar with the guidelines for how to perform CPR for both adults and children.

The guidelines for children are somewhat different from those for adults. Therefore, if you have infants and/or children ages 8 and under - or if such children regularly and routinely visit your household - it is especially important for you to learn proper emergency procedures, including CPR.

CPR is the combination of techniques that includes rescue breathing and artificial circulation. Rescue breathing is used for respiratory arrest - when breathing stops. Chest compressions are used along with rescue breathing when there is no pulse and the heart stops beating. Training in CPR is generally available in your community from such groups as the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, and professional fire department personnel. You and your family members have the responsibility to learn and practice CPR to protect your own children, your friends and loved ones.

The Best Preparation is Prevention

Preventing an emergency is the best preparation: Never leave a child alone in or near a swimming pool, spa or any other body of water!

Remember that it is not just swimming pools that are potentially dangerous. An infant or child can drown in any body of water, including spas, hot tubs - and even bathtubs. Vigilant supervision of infants and children is essential.

Preparation for an Emergency

Poolside rescue equipment, including a ring buoy with an attached line and/or a long handled hook, should be available to assist in removing the child from the water. This equipment should never be used for play.

Emergency procedures should be clearly written and posted in the pool or spa/hot tub area.

In Case of Emergency:

Dial the local emergency telephone number ("911," or the appropriate 10 - digit number for Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Fire or Police. It is advisable to have a cordless telephone available in the pool or spa/hot tub area.

Give Your

A. Name B. Location, including names of streets or landmarks

- C. Telephone number you are calling from
- D. Tell what happened, how many people need help, and the condition of the child/children
- E. Tell what assistance is being given.

Don't hang up the phone until after the emergency person does, to ensure that you have answered all of his/her questions and given all pertinent information.

Pediatric Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

These guidelines have been written to help you prepare for what to do if and when a drowning accident should occur involving an infant or child. In the vast majority of incidents of near drowning, you can save the life of the infant or child by using rescue-breathing techniques.

However, there are also guidelines for cardiac support, in those cases where no pulse or heartbeat is present. But performing these techniques requires extreme care and "hands-on" practice in a CPR instruction course. Please learn and practice CPR.

Guidelines for Rescue Breathing

If an accident happens, you should first determine if the child is conscious and breathing by seeing if he/she responds to gentle shaking. Be especially careful if the child may have sustained head or neck trauma so as not to cause spinal cord injury.

But even if the child is conscious - or if you have any doubts whatsoever - you should immediately call 911 or the emergency medical service numbers in your area.

If the child is unconscious, follow the procedures below.

1. Call out for help.

Stay with the child while someone else calls "911" or other EMS number in your area. If you are alone and the child is obviously not breathing, try one minute of CPR rescue breathing techniques before leaving the child to call for help.

2. Position the child on his/her back, lying flat on a firm surface.

If there is evidence of head and neck injury, use extreme caution in moving the child and keep in mind that the child must be turned as a unit with firm support of the head and neck so the head does not roll, twist or tilt.

3. Straighten the neck (unless injury is suspected) and lift the jaw.
4. Give slow steady breaths into the infant's nose and mouth; into the larger child's mouth with nostrils pinched closed.
5. Breathe at 20 breaths per minute for infants and 15 breaths per minute for children, using only enough air to move the chest up and down.



National Safety Council