

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR POOL OWNERS

This resource will provide you with information about water safety around backyard swimming pools.



ROYAL LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

SUPPORTED BY





149

**CHILDREN AGED 0-4 YEARS
HAVE DROWNED IN NSW
IN THE LAST 15 YEARS**

90

**OF THESE DEATHS OCCURRED IN
HOME SWIMMING POOLS, MAKING
BACKYARD POOLS THE LEADING
LOCATION FOR CHILD DROWNING**

In NSW, for every child drowning death, another 7 children are admitted to hospital following a non-fatal drowning.

Some of these children will suffer lifelong health consequences, including neurological impairment.

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR POOL OWNERS

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ROYAL LIFE SAVING

Royal Life Saving works to prevent drowning and facilitate healthy active lifestyles. As Australia’s largest provider of water safety education, our programs are delivered in schools, pools and community centres daily.

They are designed to build awareness of dangers in aquatic environments and to arm the community with lifesaving skills used in both prevention and rescue. Royal Life Saving NSW is proudly supported by the NSW Government.

To find out more about Royal Life Saving NSW visit our website at royallifesaving.com.au or contact your nearest Royal Life Saving Office and request a Services Guide.

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-  youtube.com/RoyalLifeSavingAust
-  royallifesaving.com.au

DELIGHTS AND DANGERS OF SWIMMING POOLS

Australians have a love of the water and this is reflected in our recreational pursuits with tens of millions of people each year visiting beaches, swimming pools, lakes, rivers and dams to undertake a variety of aquatic activities.

Unfortunately this interaction with water has a down side and every year more than 250 people drown in Australia. Children under the age of 5 are over-represented in these figures.

Swimming pools should be seen as a fun and enjoyable environment, especially for children, as it can assist in a child's early physical and intellectual development. The ability to safely enjoy water continues to benefit us at all stages of our lives.

Drowning is the major cause of preventable death in children under 5 years of age. Prolonged submersion can also cause serious and permanent injury. These incidents can be significantly reduced by all of us becoming aware of the potential hazards around swimming pools, learning resuscitation and participating in water awareness programs.

For every drowning death there are approximately 7 hospitalisations due to immersion incidents. Victims of immersion can experience serious injuries including permanent neurological impairment. Such injuries and subsequent long term disabilities have serious impacts upon families and communities.

By following some simple safety precautions and water safety rules you, your family and friends can expect to enjoy a lifetime of fun in and around your swimming pool.

Please take the time to read through the following pages to ensure you start off with the right swimming pool attitude.

REAL LIFE STORY: Home Pool Tragedy

In a warning to parents everywhere, the second child in 2 days has drowned in a backyard pool in NSW. The toddler gained access to the pool, when the self-latching mechanism on the sliding door to the pool did not work.

The toddler was found face down in the backyard pool by relatives and was taken to hospital but she could not be revived. Parents are being urged to learn CPR and to ensure their pool fences are properly secured.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Drowning is one of the leading causes of preventable death in children under 5 years of age.
- An average of 30 children under 5 years of age drown every year in Australia.
- For every drowning death, another 7 children are admitted to hospital as a result of a non-fatal drowning. Some of these children are left with potentially severe or persisting consequences of drowning (i.e. neurological impairment).
- For children under 5, home swimming pools are the most common site in which drowning occurs.
- Children who drowned in home swimming pools were predominately residents or invited guests of a relative or friend.
- The majority of households, in which children under 5 years of age drowned, had fencing which was inadequate, improperly maintained or used improperly (e.g. gate left propped open).
- More than half of children who drown are boys.
- Children drown all year round unlike other age groups which tend to drown more frequently in summer.

DROWNING IS PREVENTABLE



CHILD DROWNING – FACT OR FICTION

Fiction: Children are easy to supervise and I do not need to modify my strategies as they age.

Fact: Children develop quickly and at different stages their abilities can change quite rapidly. As children grow they become more mobile and like to explore. This may mean they begin climbing over barriers that are designed to keep them away from water.

Fiction: Children are at a lesser risk of drowning because of their small physical build.

Fact: Young children are at risk because of their physical build. They are 'top heavy' and more prone to falling into water due to a lack of balance.

Fiction: Children are aware of the dangers water poses to them and will take care around water.

Fact: Children do not understand or perceive the hazards that water presents to them. They have no real sense of danger and require a high level of supervision.

Fiction: Young children can be left under the supervision of older children.

Fact: Never leave children in the care of older children. Older children may not perceive the amount of danger a young child may be in and may confuse drowning for playing or lack the attention levels needed to supervise correctly.

Fiction: Water needs to be reasonably deep for children to drown in it.

Fact: Children only need a small amount of water to drown in. Water that is deep enough to cover their nose and mouth is enough for a child to drown in.

Fiction: I can leave my child alone in the bath for a few seconds/minutes while I grab something I forgot, or to go to the toilet.

Fact: Drowning can occur in a matter of moments and you should never leave your child without active adult supervision. Ensure you have everything you need before filling the bathtub.

Fiction: A bath seat keeps a child safe in the bath.

Fact: Children have drowned while in a bath seat. Using a bath seat does also not replace the need for constant active adult supervision.

Fiction: Young children are naturally docile and do not like to explore around water.

Fact: Children are a naturally inquisitive group and are attracted to water. Children under 5 years of age are especially at risk because of their natural curiosity about their environment.

Fiction: When children are drowning they will make a lot of noise and cry and call for help.

Fact: This is a common misconception, when children drown it is silent.

Fiction: Children splash, yell and make noise when drowning.

Fact: Drownings are often silent. Many parents mistakenly believe they can listen out for their child, but drowning can occur in a matter of seconds without any splashing or crying to alert parents/caregivers.

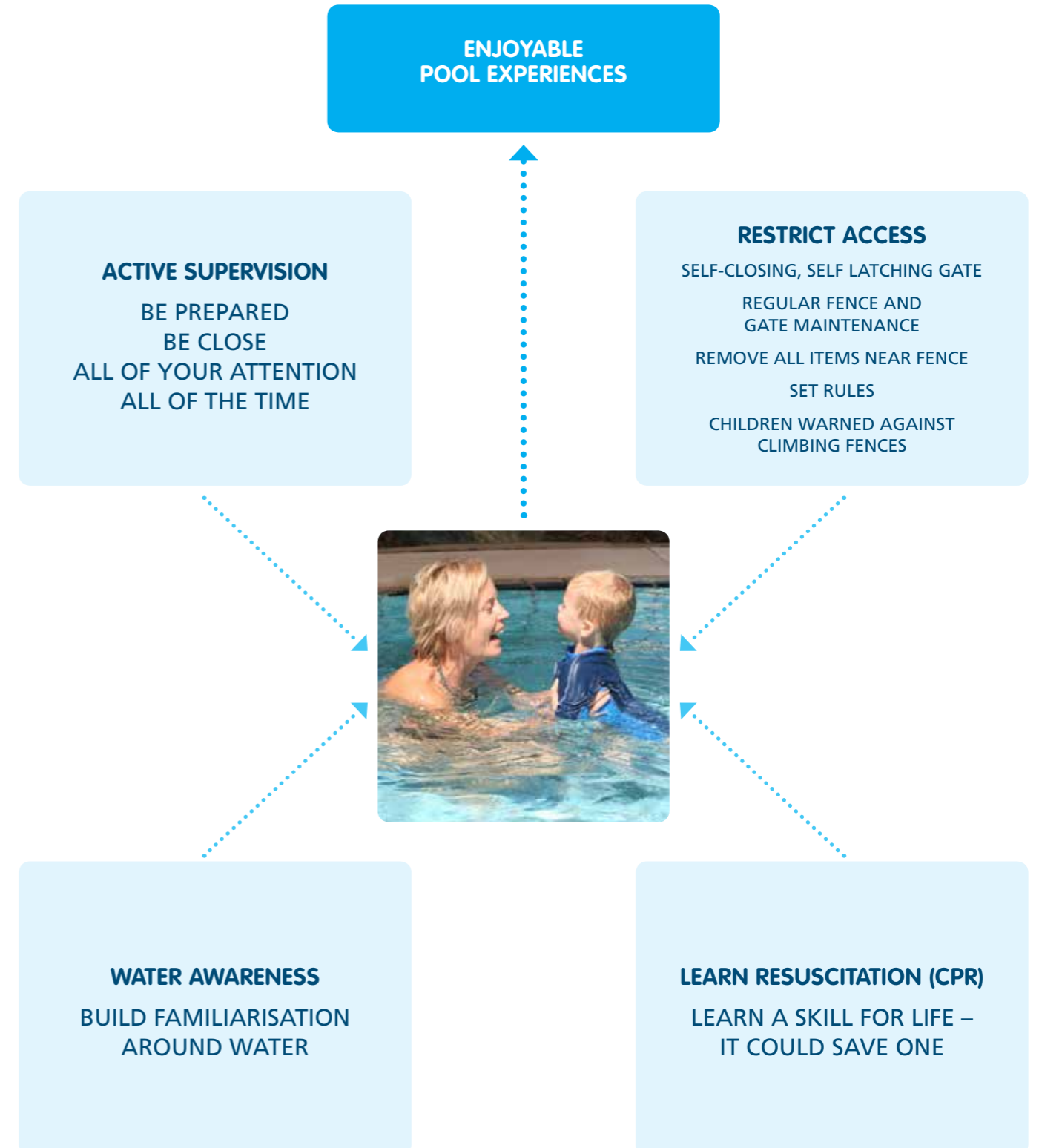


**WATER. IT'S ONLY SAFE
WHILE YOU'RE WATCHING.
KEEP WATCH**

THE 4 ACTIONS THAT SAVE CHILDREN'S LIVES

There are four key drowning prevention actions. These should not be used individually but together to maximise child safety – if one line of defence fails, the other prevention measures will be actively working to prevent your child from drowning.

KEY ACTIONS FOR SWIMMING POOL SAFETY



ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Always supervise your child within arm's reach

Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your children all of the time, when they are in, on or around the water. Supervision is not an occasional glance while you are busy with other activities, but being in constant visual contact with your child.

Depending on your child's age, you may even need to be in the water and within arm's reach at all times. For older children, be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency.

Parents are busy and often try to do many things at once to save time. But when you multi-task you can too easily become distracted and not give your full attention to the safety of your children.

Older children are not equipped to deal with the responsibility of supervising younger children. It is an adult's job and children of any age should never be burdened with the responsibility.

Royal Life Saving believes that one of the smartest ways to supervise children is to have a designated supervisor. Responsibility can be rotated and if there is a large number of children to supervise, leave an adult stationed at each different place where the children will play to monitor that area.

Active supervision means to:

- ✔ **Be Prepared** – Always make sure you have everything ready when going swimming e.g. towels, dry clothes etc.
- ✔ **Be Close** – Always be within arm's reach of your child.
- ✔ **All Of Your Attention** – Focus all of your attention on your child and watch, talk and play with them when they are in the water.
- ✔ **All Of The Time** – You should never leave your child alone in the water, nor should they be left in the care of an older child.
- ✔ **Take your child with you.**
If you leave the swimming pool area.
- ✔ **Setting up rules and boundaries** for children are essential to their safety.

ARE YOU REALLY, REALLY SUPERVISING?

BE PREPARED, BE CLOSE, ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION, ALL OF THE TIME!



RESTRICT ACCESS TO WATER – FENCE AND GATES

Provide Barriers to Water Locations

- Statistics show that the most common location where drowning occurs for children under 5 years of age is the home pool or spa.
- Stop children drowning in your swimming pool or spa by installing a fence that meets Australian Standard AS 1926.
- Fencing that isolates your pool from the house is the most effective method.
- Once a fence and self-closing, self-latching gate are installed, they must be kept in good working order.
- Check your fence and gate now, and then on a regular basis. Download a checklist now from www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au
- Remember, one of the most common areas of weakness in a pool fence is a weak or faulty gate latch. Are the latches working properly? Does it close first time, every time? Check the gate and fence now.
- Is there anything leaning against the swimming pool fence which a child could use to climb over the fence? If so, take it away now.
- Inflatable pools need to be fenced if they are able to be filled to a depth of 300mm or more.
- The fence can also act not only as a physical barrier but also as a psychological barrier when parents reprimand children for climbing the fence.

Actions for Parents and Carers

CAN YOU TICK THE FOLLOWING KEY SAFETY REQUIREMENTS?

- ✔ **All water bodies, including inflatable pools and wading pools, over 300mm in depth fenced.**
- ✔ **Gate installed that self-closes and self-latches.**
- ✔ **Fence and gate regularly maintained.**
Checklist from www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au completed.
- ✔ **Objects leaning against or near the pool fence that a child could use to climb over removed.**
- ✔ **Children reprimanded if climbing on pool fence.**

CLOSE THE GATE EVERY, EVERY TIME!



WATER AWARENESS

Building familiarity and confidence

Water awareness combines a range of strategies and activities designed to keep your child safe when in, on, or around water. These include water familiarisation, checking for and removing water hazards, setting rules around water and discussing water safety with your child.

Water awareness classes focus on the gradual introduction of very basic skills for children aged 6 to 36 months like moving in the water, getting the face wet and blowing bubbles. These skills assist in developing confidence.

From five years children are suitable for learn to swim classes. These programs will extend the basic skills into recognisable swimming strokes.

But you can also use bath time as a time for water awareness. Let your baby or child feel, experience and play with water. Put rules in place for when they go near water and ensure parents and adults uphold these rules themselves to set a good example. When visiting new aquatic locations you can examine these together with your child and discuss any safety issues and rules for that location with your child.

Remember:

- ✔ Use bath time as a time for water awareness.
- ✔ Create rules for children when they go near the swimming pool.
- ✔ Discuss hazards and risks at new locations and set rules.
- ✔ Allocate a designated supervisor whenever children are in the pool area.
- ✔ Always enforce rules.
- ✔ Visit your local pool to find out how to participate in water familiarisation and learn to swim classes.



NO CPR CHART? YOU'RE BREAKING THE LAW!

A GUIDE TO CPR

YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD BE SUPERVISED WHEN USING THIS SWIMMING POOL.
POOL GATES MUST BE KEPT CLOSED AT ALL TIMES.
KEEP ARTICLES, OBJECTS AND STRUCTURES AT LEAST 900mm CLEAR OF THE POOL FENCE AT ALL TIMES.

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER
Royal Life Saving
SCAN TO WATCH CPR

D CHECK FOR DANGER
To yourself, bystanders & the casualty.

R CHECK FOR RESPONSE
Squeeze their shoulders & hands, ask the casualty questions.

S SEND FOR HELP
If unresponsive, call Triple Zero (000).

A OPEN THE AIRWAY
First, check the airway is clear of obstructions. Clear if required. Then open the airway by tilting head. No head tilt for infants.

B BREATHING NORMALLY?
NO - START CPR (If Yes - Place casualty on their side).

C START CPR
Unresponsive & not breathing normally - 30 COMPRESSIONS & 2 BREATHS.

	COMPRESSION POINT	COMPRESSION RATE	BREATHS
CHILD & ADULT (OVER 1 YEAR)	1 or 2 hands on the centre of the chest. Compress 1/3 of chest depth.	Compress at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute.	Tilt head, lift chin & give breaths. Look for the rise & fall of the chest in between breaths.
INFANT (0-1 YEAR)	2 fingers on the centre of the chest. Compress 1/3 of chest depth.	Compress at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute.	Don't tilt head, keep in neutral position, support jaw, cover mouth & nose. Look for the rise & fall of the chest in between breaths.

CONTINUE CPR UNTIL RESPONSIVENESS OR NORMAL BREATHING RETURNS. IF NORMAL BREATHING RETURNS, PLACE THE CASUALTY ON THEIR SIDE & MAINTAIN AN OPEN AIRWAY. CLOSELY MONITOR THE CASUALTY.

D ATTACH DEFIBRILLATOR
AS SOON AS AVAILABLE, FOLLOW PROMPTS.

ROYALLIFESAVING.COM.AU

ALL SWIMMING POOLS ARE REQUIRED
TO HAVE A CPR CHART DISPLAYED
WITHIN THE SWIMMING POOL AREA

royallifesaving.com.au

CHECKLIST FOR NSW POOL OWNERS

It is important that all NSW pool owners inspect their pool and undertake regular maintenance. To assist with this there are a range of checklists that you can utilise.

To find the right self-assessment checklist you will need to know a few things about your pool:

- When was it built or installed?
- If the pool fence or means of access to the pool was substantially rebuilt or altered, when did that last occur?
- What type of pool do you have - indoor? spa pool? outdoor? portable?
- Was the pool built before 1 July 2010. If so, the rules are different if you have:
 - a waterfront property,
 - a small-sized property (less than 230 square metres)
 - or a large property (over 2 hectares).

To download the self-assessment checklists visit: swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au/checklists

Which pool barrier self-assessment checklist do I use?

Checklist	Used for
Indoor Pool	Use this checklist for all indoor pools, including spas that do not have a lockable child-resistant lid.
Spa	Use this checklist for all Spa pools except indoor spa pools
Outdoor Pool 1	Use this checklist for outdoor pools built before 1 September 2008 that are not on waterfront, large-sized or small-sized properties
Outdoor Pool 2	Use this checklist for outdoor pools that were built between 1 September 2008 and 30 April 2013 that are not waterfront, large-sized or small-sized properties Applies to all pools built between 1 July 2010 and 30 April 2013 regardless of property type
Outdoor Pool 3	Use this checklist for outdoor pools built after 1 May 2013
Portable or Inflatable Pool	Use this checklist for all portable or inflatable pools
Outdoor Pool - Waterfront Property	Use this checklist for outdoor pools that are not spas or portable/inflatable pools built on waterfront properties
Outdoor Pool - Large Property	Use this checklist for outdoor pools that are not spas or portable/inflatable pools that are built on properties of 2 hectares or greater in size
Outdoor Pool - Small Property	Use this checklist for all outdoor pools that are not spas or portable/inflatable pools built on properties that are less than 230sqm in size

Note: These self-assessment checklists are provided to give you an indication about whether or not your pool barrier meets the requirements in NSW. A professional inspector will use a more comprehensive and technical checklist that may result in a different outcome.



**ALWAYS KEEP WATCH
BE PREPARED
BE CLOSE
ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION
ALL OF THE TIME!**

KEEP WATCH
TO PREVENT DROWNING

SUPPORTED BY
ROYAL LIFE SAVING
 NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW
 GOVERNMENT

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RoyalLifeSaving
 KeepWatch.com.au

LIFE STAGES FROM 0 TO 5 YEARS

As our children grow they become exposed to various risks.

As they become “mobile” they have a greater awareness of their surroundings and seek to explore these at every opportunity. This exploratory phase can lead to a child coming into contact with the swimming pool area. These areas are normally associated with fun and activity and therefore are a highly desirable location for young children.

By understanding your child’s developmental life stage you can be better prepared to deal with the various risks and hazards that impact specific age groups.



0 TO 11 MONTHS

On average four children aged 0 to 11 months drown every year in Australia. Three quarters of these drowning deaths occur around the home, in bathtubs, backyard swimming pools, buckets and eskies.

Bath time poses one of the highest risks accounting for 72% of all drowning deaths in this age group.

A lack of adequate adult supervision is the main cause of drowning deaths in this life stage.

Actions to prevent your child aged 0 to 11 months from drowning:

- Have everything ready for bathing.
- Keep bath water to a minimum depth.
- Remain within arm’s reach.
- Never leave baby alone while in the bath or around water.
- Update your CPR skills annually.
- Create a safe play area to restrict your child’s access to water.
- Empty buckets/containers that can hold water.

1 TO 2 YEARS

On average 21 children aged between 1 and 2 years drown every year in Australia. Many of these incidents occur in a few seconds when parents and carers are distracted.

62% of all drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools which pose the greatest drowning risk. Children commonly access the pool through a faulty fence, a propped open gate or by climbing on objects such as a table or BBQ.

Actions to prevent your 1-2 year old from drowning:

- Remain within arm’s reach and never leave your child alone around water.
- Ensure pool fence is correctly installed, regularly maintained and gate is never left open.
- Create a safe play area to restrict your child’s access to water.
- Establish simple rules such as no going near water without an adult.
- Enrol your child in water familiarisation lessons.
- Update your CPR skills annually.
- Empty buckets/containers that can hold water.

3 TO 5 YEARS

Nine children between the ages of 3 and 5 years drown every year in Australia. Almost 50% of all drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools. Boys in this age group are twice as likely to drown than girls.

Restricting access to water, particularly in homes with swimming pools or easy access to water, is vital. To protect children, correctly install and regularly maintain pool fencing, and create a safe play area near the home.

Actions to prevent your 3-5 year old from drowning:

- Remain within arm’s reach and never leave your child alone around water.
- Ensure pool fence is correctly installed, regularly maintained and gate is never left open.
- Create a safe play area to restrict your child’s access to water.
- Enrol your child in water familiarisation lessons and learn to swim classes.
- Establish simple rules such as no going near water without an adult.
- Update your CPR skills annually.

LEARN RESUSCITATION (CPR)

CPR and First Aid skills will make your home pool environment safer. Not only are these skills for life, but should something go wrong around the home pool, there will be someone on hand with the skills to act.

Enrol in a course today and empower you and your family with the skills to deal with a water emergency. Royal Life Saving runs courses in:

First Aid

Gain the knowledge and skills to administer first aid until medical help arrives. Anyone at any time may need to give urgent assistance and a Royal Life Saving First Aid course will equip you with the necessary skills. Nationally recognised and compliant with Workplace Health and Safety conditions, delivery options include flexible, face-to-face and increasingly popular First Aid in a Box™ online learning.

Resuscitation (CPR)

Learn about CPR, Defibrillation, Oxygen Resuscitation and Emergency Care. The earliest response with CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) could save a person’s life.

Course Delivery options

Delivery modes vary depending on your selected course and may include:

1. Face-to-Face – Classroom based includes theory, practical instruction and assessment
2. Flexible delivery – Self-paced pre-learning and classroom based delivery.
3. On-line - Self-paced E-learning before attending a face-to-face practical assessment

For more information on a course and to enrol, visit: www.royallifesaving.com.au/training



CASE STUDY: Parents Perform CPR

In February 2008, knowing CPR helped one husband and wife save their two children from drowning. With their parents momentarily distracted while visiting relatives, the couple’s two sons made their way into a backyard swimming pool.

After a relative raised the alarm, the boys were found pale and unconscious. Each parent immediately began performing CPR on the boys and they each vomited up water. Gradually the boys began to gasp for air and started breathing as ambulances arrived. They have since made a full recovery and their parents credit knowing CPR with saving the lives of their boys.





FAULTY POOL GATES ARE THE PRIMARY RISK FACTOR IN HOME POOL DROWNING DEATHS OF YOUNG CHILDREN
CHECK YOUR FENCE & GATE TODAY!

WORKING WITH POOL CHEMICALS

Storage and Use

- Read the label before purchasing any chemical. Understand the correct use and any dangers posed by the chemical.
- Choose the least dangerous product that will do the job, especially if children are present.
- Lock up swimming pool chemicals:
 - In a cabinet in a dry well-ventilated area
 - Away from other chemicals or substances including hydrocarbons (petrol, kerosene, oil etc.)
 - Out of the reach of children. Remember, children are curious, inventive and good climbers.
- Do not inhale dust or fumes from any pool chemicals. Ensure adequate ventilation.
- Add chemicals to water. Never add water to chemicals.
- Hands must be clean and dry. Always wash hands before and after handling chemicals.
- Safely dispose of spilt chemicals. Do not put back into their containers.
- Never mix chemicals together. Use a clean scoop for each chemical.
- Never reuse old chemical containers.
- Promptly wash off any residues which get on your skin.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and wear protective clothing: gloves, safety goggles, long-sleeved shirts, etc.

Safety Precautions



Face Mask or Eye Protection



Protective Clothing



Enclosed Footwear



Remember to use Gloves

Action

Follow first aid instructions. If skin or eyes are burnt, if chemical has been swallowed or ingested or fumes inhaled - seek immediate medical attention. Remember the Poisons Information Line: 131 126.

**OR IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)**

TIP: TALK TO YOUR LOCAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA SHOP ABOUT CHEMICAL DOSING AND WATER QUALITY TO ENSURE IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR SWIMMING.

CAUTION
**POOL
CHEMICAL
STORAGE**

**RESTRICTED
AUTHORISED
PERSONS ONLY**

ENJOY YOUR SWIMMING POOL

Visit your Council website for local information and support.

This Guide has been developed to ensure you have a wonderful time in and around your backyard swimming pool. By implementing some simple practices and behaviours you will provide your family and friends with many fun and enjoyable experiences. It is vitally important that you maintain active supervision whenever anybody is within the pool area. In addition, please ensure you undertake regular inspections of your fence and gate to ensure it is in proper working condition.

ONLINE RESOURCES

keepwatch.com.au

Resources for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe when in, on or around the water.

swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au

Up to date checklists and swimming pool registration.

olg.nsw.gov.au





Office of Local Government with NSW Council contacts.

bpb.nsw.gov.au

The building professionals board provides information on private certifiers who can inspect your pool.



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