Water Safety

In 2005, drowning claimed the lives of 3,582 people. Although all age groups are represented, children four years old and younger have the highest death rate due to drowning, representing more than 25 percent. Most drowning and near-drowning incidents happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub.

Safety Tips

- Never leave a child alone near water: on the beach, at a pool, or in the bathtub. If you must leave, take your child with you.

- Kids don't drown only in pools. Bathtubs, buckets, toilets, and hot tubs present drowning dangers as well.

- Enroll children older than age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."

- Always follow posted safety precautions when visiting water parks.

- If you're visiting a public pool, keep an eye on your kids. Lifeguards aren't babysitters.

- Teach your children these four key swimming rules:

    o Always swim with a buddy.

    o Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.

    o Don't push or jump on others.

    o Be prepared for an emergency.

- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.

- Always use approved personal flotation devices (life jackets).

- Don't underestimate the power of water. Even rivers and lakes can have undertows.

- Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).