



EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA



FACT SHEET No. 11

Public Pool Safety



Q. Who drowns at public swimming pools?

A. In the past decade, 80 people have drowned in public swimming pools. A quarter of these were children under five years of age. While young children are the main victims, non-swimmers who fall in or swimmers caught out of their depth are also at risk.

Q. Why do drowning deaths occur at public swimming pools?

A. Many people mistakenly believe that once they enter a swimming pool facility, the responsibility for their child's safety is transferred to the lifeguards. This is not the case. Lifeguards are not babysitters. Some parents also believe that other parents will keep an eye on their child. Every parent/guardian is responsible for the safety of their own child.

Q. What is the role of a pool lifeguard?

A. The role of the lifeguard in a public pool facility is to oversee the safe operation of the facility and ensure all patrons can safely enjoy their time there. Their responsibilities include: posting warning signs, establishing and enforcing safety rules, cleaning pool decks and basic first aid. Lifeguards often perform these responsibilities for hundreds of patrons at a time so it is important to always supervise your child yourself. Lifeguards are not babysitters!

Q. What is active supervision?

A. Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your children all of the time, when they are in, on or around the water. You must be within arms' reach, interacting with your child and be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency. The age of the child dictates the level of supervision required.

Q. What can I do to make my trip to the public pool safer?

A. Always obey any instructions the lifeguards give you and follow the advice on signs around the pool. Always actively supervise children. Abide by pool rules and report those who do not to the lifeguards.

Real Life Story - Public Pools Tragedy

The Keep Watch @ Public Pools program again reminds parents to supervise their children at the public swimming pool after a tragic drowning of a young boy. The boy was found on the bottom of the public pool, after wandering away from his father while in the change rooms. CPR was administered on the scene by ambulance officers however he died in hospital. Pool staff, lifeguards and the community are in shock at the tragedy. Parents are reminded to be vigilant and to keep watch over children at all times.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**

Public Pool Safety Checklist:

- At a minimum a child under 10 years of age is actively supervised by a person 16 years or older
- Children 0-5 years actively supervised at all times, parent/guardian within arms' reach in the water
- Parent/caregiver dressed ready for action, including unexpected entry to pool
- Child aged 6-10 years under constant active supervision, with parent/guardian prepared to get wet
- Child aged 11-14 years – checked on by physically going to the point where they are in or around the water



LIFEGUARDS ARE NOT BABYSITTERS!
YOUR CHILD.
YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

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