

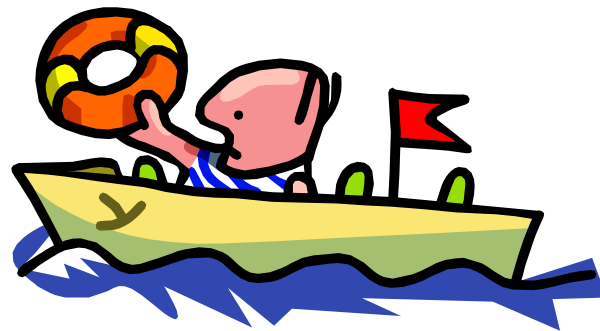
# Water Safety Facts

Every Adult and Child Should Know



## WHAT IS GOOD WATER ANYWAY?

- All of us need to drink 6 to 8 glasses every day for good health.
- We wash our bodies and clothes in water.
- Fields are irrigated with water so fruits and vegetables can grow.
- Water in lakes and rivers provides rafting and boating fun.



## MOST WATER-RELATED TRAGEDIES COULD BE PREVENTED, IF...

- Personal flotation devices (PFDs) or life jackets are used.
- Barriers are in place between the home and swimming pool.
- CPR is known.
- Children over the age of 3 learn to swim.
- Children are supervised at all times.

## DANGER: CANALS

- Many dangerous things may be in the canals.
- Most canals have concrete sides which are very slippery because moss and other water plants grow on the concrete. Dirt sides are very muddy and can cave in.
- The water's fast current in the center pulls a person away from the sides.
- The cold water causes a person's body temperature to drop; you cannot swim because you are so cold!
- The water current looks very slow, but the undercurrent is very fast.

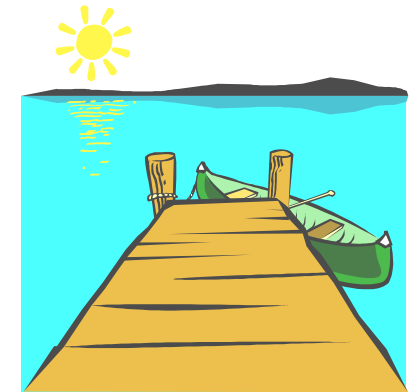


## DANGER: PONDING BASINS

- Illness can be caused by contact with the mud or swallowing of the contaminated water (pseudomonas, dysentery, etc.)
- Recharge basins (or ponding basins) are closed at all times and should never be entered

## DANGER: RIVERS

- Children should never enter swift-flowing waters alone, even with life jackets.
- Water flowing through bushes or small trees can snare a swimmer, even with a life jacket on. This is called a "strainer".
- If a swimmer's foot gets jammed in the rocks on the bottom, the force of the current can break a leg or hold the person under, even in shallow water.

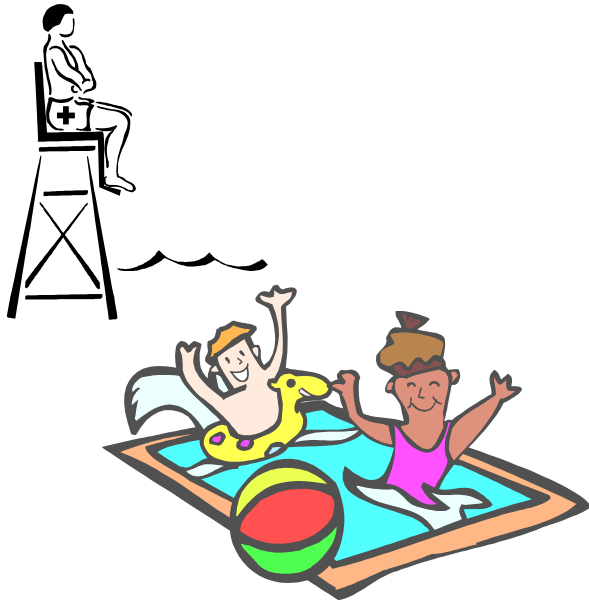


## DANGER: LAKES

- Designated swimming areas are kept free of objects and other debris. They are roped off so boats, jet skis and other watercraft cannot enter.
- Diving should be done only in swimming pools or other clear water that is at least nine (9) feet deep.

## DANGER: POOLS

- Drowning is the leading cause of preventable death for children ages 1 to 5 and the second leading cause of death in adolescents and adults ages 15 to 44.
- In Fresno County, 20 to 30 people drown each year. Statistics show 10 of these victims will be children between the ages of 1 and 18, and 20% of them will drown in family swimming pools and spas.
- Thirty to 40 children in the county are hospitalized because of a near-drowning; 3 to 4 of these suffer severe brain injuries.
- An estimated 1 in every 3 Fresno homes has a swimming pool, and one out of four of these families report "close calls" where a child may have drowned or been seriously injured if he/she had not been rescued.



## POOL RULES

- Always have adult supervision
- Never swim alone.
- Do not push, run or horseplay.
- No eating or gum chewing in the pool.
- Don't swim near diving boards and slides.
- Do not swim during a lightning storm.
- No glass in the pool area.

## DANGER: SPAS

- The temperature of the water in a hot tub can be high enough to scald a small child.
- Spas are not wading pools or play areas; they are meant for use by adults.

## Water Safety Council of Fresno County

In 1982, some Fresno residents became concerned when a child drowned in a local canal. This group recognized the larger danger to all children and brought their concern before the Fresno City Council and Fresno County Board of Supervisors. At the request of both the City Council and Board of Supervisors, an independent task force was formed to assess water safety problems and to recommend possible solutions. The Council and the Board support the ongoing efforts of the task force to prevent water-related injuries and deaths.

In 1993, the task force became incorporated as the Water Safety Council of Fresno County. Council Members come from all walks of life, including:

- local irrigation & flood control districts
- independent water districts
- hospitals and physicians
- emergency medical services workers
- park rangers
- fire departments
- the school system
- City and County agencies
- Red Cross
- interested citizens
- County Sheriffs
- rehabilitation workers
- federal and state agencies

## The Issue

Water safety should be a concern of every Fresno County resident.

## Definition

Drowning is death from suffocation by submersion in water. Children or adults who survive at least 24 hours after a submersion injury have had a near-drowning accident. Some will survive without any obvious consequences, but others will suffer permanent brain injury or eventual death.

## Answers

The Water Safety Council believes many strategies should be carried out to reduce drowning and near-drownings.

The Council will continue educational programs for adults and children of the county to make them aware of ways to reduce injury and death.

Education must be supported by appropriate regulations, posting of warning signs, boating safety programs, use of life jackets and mandating safety barriers for all swimming pools.

## Making Fresno County Safer

The Water Safety Council serves an important role as a multi-agency advocate for water safety in the County. Working together, the Council has a far greater impact in the community than the efforts of agencies working independently. Water safety questions and concerns can be addressed to either the Council chairperson or to individual Council members as representatives of participating agencies.

For additional information, including how to obtain Water Safety Kits (video and curriculum included for children K-3), please visit our web site at [www.watersafe.org](http://www.watersafe.org).