



BAKERSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

DROWNING FACTS

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths to children ages 14 and under. A temporary lapse in supervision is a common factor in most drownings and near-drownings. Children can drown in a matter of seconds--in the time it takes to answer the phone. There is often no splashing to warn of trouble. Children can drown in small quantities of water and are at risk in their own homes from wading pools, bathtubs, buckets, diaper pails, and toilets as well as swimming pools, spas, and hot tubs.

Deaths and Injuries

- A swimming pool is 14 times more likely than a motor vehicle to be involved in the death of a child age 4 and under.
- Each year, approximately 1,150 children ages 14 and under drown; more than half are preschoolers (ages 0-4).
- Each year, an estimated 5,000 children ages 14 and under are hospitalized due to near-drownings.
- Of those children that survive near-drownings, 5-20 percent suffer severe and permanent disability.

Where Drownings Occur

- Approximately 50 percent of preschooler drownings occur in residential swimming pools.
- Each year, more than 2,000 preschooler near-drownings occur in residential pools.
- Of preschooler pool drownings, 65 percent occur in the child's home pool and 33 percent at the homes of friends, neighbors or relatives.
- Each year, 350 drownings (for all ages) happen in bathtubs.
- Each year, approximately 40 children drown in five-gallon buckets.
- In ten states--Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington-- drowning surpasses all other causes of death to children ages 14 and under.

How and When Drownings Occur

- Of all preschoolers who drown, 70 percent are in the care of one of both parents at the time of the drowning.
- Of all preschoolers who drown, 75 percent are missing from sight for five minutes or less.
- Two-thirds of all drownings happen between May and August.
- Of all drownings, 40 percent occur on Saturdays and Sundays.

Who is at Risk

- Of all age groups, children ages 1-4 have the highest drowning death rate.
- American Indian and Alaska Native children ages 14 and under have a drowning death rate that is nearly two times higher than white children. A total of 55 percent of these drowning deaths occur in natural bodies of water.
- African-American children ages 4 and under have a drowning death rate that is lower than white children and lower than children in the overall population.
- African-American children ages 5-14 have a drowning death rate that is nearly three times higher than white children.