

Water Safety Message

Water Safety

Drowning claims the lives of over 4,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children 0-4 have the highest death rate due to drowning.

Important Tips

- Never leave a child alone near water - at the pool, the beach or in the tub - a tragedy can occur in seconds. If you must leave, even if it is to answer the phone, take the child with you.
- Always use approved personal floatation devices (life jackets). The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that 9 out of 10 drowning victims were not wearing one.
- Beware of neighborhood pools and ornamental ponds - be it your own or your neighbors. Remove toys from in and around the pool when not in use. Toys can attract children to the pool.
- For all pools, barriers can offer added protection against drowning. The pool should be completely secured with adequate fencing. Power or manual covers can completely cover the pool surface and block access to the water, however, be sure to drain standing water from the surface of the pool cover as a child can drown in very small amounts of water.
- Enroll children over the age of three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. Keep in mind that although valuable life protecting skills are learned, swimming lessons do not make your child "drown-proof."
- Older children risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate the water depth.
- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.
- Always have a well-maintained first-aid kit and emergency phone contact handy.
- Teens and parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and how to relieve a foreign body airway obstruction.
- For increased safety, ask pool managers about the availability of an AED (automatic external defibrillator) and choose to swim only at pools where one is present.
- All swimmers should follow these four key rules:
 1. Always swim with a buddy.
 2. Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
 3. Don't push or jump on others.
 4. Be prepared for an emergency.

Please contact Captain Chuck Owens of the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department (252-329-4414) for additional information.