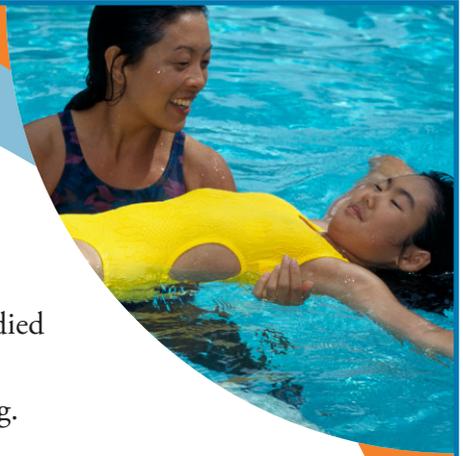




# Drowning and Water-Related Safety

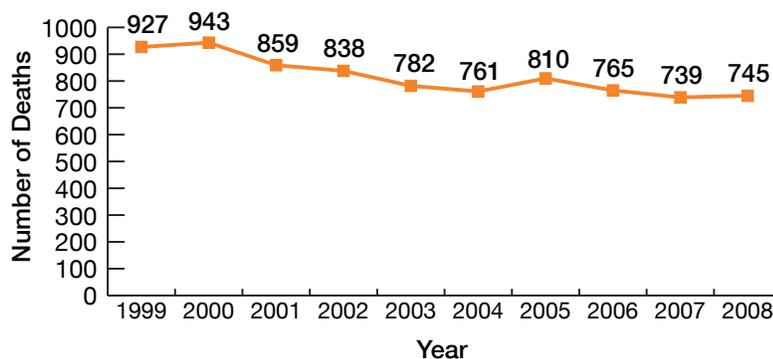


## Key Facts

- Since 1999, an average of more than 815 children ages 14 and under have died as a result of unintentional drowning each year.
- In 2008, 745 children ages 14 and under died from unintentional drowning.

### 1999-2008 Unintentional Drowning Deaths Among Children

(United States, Ages 14 and Under)



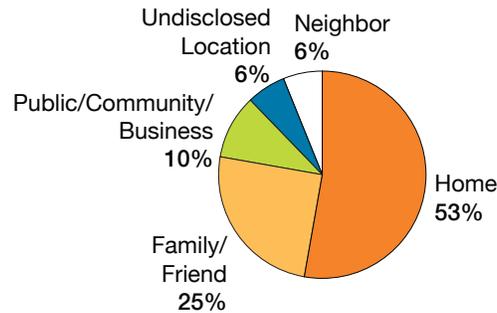
- Since 2001, an average of more than 3,700 children sustained nonfatal near drowning-related injuries each year.
- In 2009, more than 5,000 children sustained nonfatal near drowning-related injuries.
- Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 14 and under.
- From 2006 to 2008, each year there have been approximately 5,100 pool- or spa-related submersion injuries treated at emergency departments and 383 pool- or spa-related deaths among children ages 14 and under.
- Children under 5 years of age represent a majority (76 percent) of reported fatalities and almost 80 percent of emergency department-treated submersion injuries.

## Where, When and How

- Swimming pools are the most common site for a drowning to occur among children between the ages 1 and 4 years.
- Approximately 72 percent of pool submersion deaths and 55 percent of pool submersion injuries occur at a home.
- Eighty-four percent of drowning deaths among children ages 5 and under occur at a home, while 45 percent of fatalities among children ages 5 to 14 occur at a public pool.
- From 1990 to 2005, there were approximately 100 reported cases of body entrapment by a pool or spa drain. From 1990 to 2004, there were 43 incidents of hair entanglement in the drains.
- From 2004 to 2006, 47 children died in inflatable pools. From 2001 to 2009, 244 portable pool submersion cases were reported involving children ages 11 and under.

## 2006-2008 Reported Pool or Spa Submersion Deaths by Incident Location

(United States, Ages 4 and Under)



- According to a national study of drowning-related incidents involving children, a parent or caregiver claimed to be supervising the child in nearly nine out of 10 child drowning-related deaths.
- Two-thirds of drowning deaths occur in the summer, between May and August, and most commonly on the weekends.
- The majority of infant (less than 1 year old) drowning deaths happen in bathtubs or large buckets.
- Recreational boating accidents caused 9 drowning deaths among children ages 12 and under in 2010; more than half of the children were not wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs) or life jackets.

### Who

- In 2008, children ages 4 and under had the highest drowning death rate (about two times greater than other age groups) and accounted for 65 percent of drownings.
- Male children have a drowning rate twice that of female children.
- Black children ages 5 to 14 have a drowning rate three times that of their white counterparts.
- Low-income children are at greater risk from non-swimming pool drownings.

### Proven Interventions

- Four-sided isolation fencing around home pools could prevent 50 to 90 percent of childhood drownings and near-drownings. When used properly, door alarms, pool alarms and automatic pool covers add an extra layer of protection.
- The use of specially-made drain covers, safety vacuum-release systems, multiple filter pumps and other pressure-venting pool filter mechanisms can reduce the risk of entrapment.
- It is estimated that half of all drowning events among recreational boaters from 2000 to 2006 could have been prevented if personal flotation devices were worn. In 2003, 62 percent of children ages 14 and under who drowned in reported recreational boating accidents were not wearing PFDs or life jackets.
- Educational efforts focused on PFDs and safe boating practices are effective in increasing PFD usage.

### Costs

- In 2000, fatal drowning or submersion-related injuries cost a total of \$5 billion in the United States.
- In the United States, the total annual cost of drowning-related deaths among children ages 14 and under is over \$800 million.

## **Laws and Regulations**

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has developed guidelines, including education and labeling, to address the hazard of infants drowning in five-gallon buckets.
- Ten states and many communities have safety laws requiring some type of fencing around residential swimming pools.
- Congress passed the *Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act* in 2007, which requires that all public pools and spas use anti-entrapment devices, such as drain covers, unblockable drains and safety vacuum release systems.
- The U.S. Coast Guard requires that all children under age 13 wear a personal flotation device while on a recreational vessel. Forty-eight states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have some form of legislation that requires children to wear PFDs.
- Recreational boats must carry one properly-sized, U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD (accessible and in good condition) for each person on board.