

GUIDE YOUR CHILDREN TO SAFE WATERS



The Virginia Department of Social Services reports that a lack of proper supervision is a leading cause of drowning in children. Understanding the safety steps required to protect your children around any body of water they may encounter, especially during the summer months, is critical.



*It takes as little as 20 seconds
for a child to drown.*

Docks

- » Watch for tripping hazards on the dock and do not allow running on docks
- » Ensure that old boards are replaced and that there are no nails sticking up from the wood
- » Wear life jackets at all times (do not substitute water wings or other flotation devices for life jackets). Ensure that life jackets fit correctly and are up to date
- » Consider putting a gate at the front of docks and other forms of safety rails along the dock
- » Ensure that there is at least one throwable buoy on each dock
- » Know the depth of the water around your dock and do not allow diving from the dock
- » Put away all water toys and fishing equipment to prevent children from going to the water alone

Pools

- » Children need constant supervision by a safe and sober caretaker while swimming
- » Teach your child to swim as early as possible and contact local community agencies for information about lessons
- » Swimming pools should be surrounded by a fence
- » Children should be wearing U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets while swimming





Beaches

- » Do not go in the water with an open wound
- » Be aware that beaches have litter, sharp glass and other debris, and wear sand socks or water shoes for protection
- » Ensure that any child in the water is wearing a life jacket (do not substitute with water wings or other flotation devices), even if they know how to swim
- » Be aware of postings and notices regarding algae blooms and water conditions
- » Be aware of potential rip tides and teach children what to do if they encounter one
- » Ensure that all children are wearing sunscreen, even on cloudy days, and reapply often
- » Enroll children in swim lessons as soon as possible

Boats

- » Ensure regular maintenance of boats, especially for electrical and fuel needs
- » Turn off portable heaters and other appliances when not on board the boat
- » Everyone on the boat should wear life jackets at all times while on and near the boat
- » Wear proper footwear at all times to avoid slipping or tripping
- » Ensure that children are secure while on board and maintain safe speeds



Visit the resources below for additional information:

- » American Academy of Pediatrics - www.aap.org
- » Pool Safely - www.poolsafely.gov
- » Safe Kids Worldwide - www.safekids.org
- » Virginia Department of Health - www.vdh.virginia.gov



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

