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Backyard Swimming Pool Accident Statistics

- Three-quarters of children involved in pool submersion or drowning accidents were between 1 and 3 years old. Boys between 1 and 3 years old were the most likely victims of fatal drownings or nearly fatal submersions in residential swimming pools.
- Eighty percent of child deaths and more than 60% of injuries occur at a residence. Home pools are the most common drowning site for children under age 5, with 65% of the accidents in a pool owned by the victim's immediate family and 33% in pools owned by relatives or friends. Less than 2% are a result of a child trespassing on property where they don't live or belong.
- More than 75% of the victims had been out of sight for five minutes or less, and were being supervised by one or both parents at the time. Almost half of the incidents are attributed to an adult losing contact or knowledge of the whereabouts of the child, and the child accessing the pool during this time period.
- Most children who drown in home pools enter the water without their parent's or caregiver's knowledge. Nearly 70% of children who drowned in home pools were not expected to be in or around the pool but were found in the water.
- Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home before the pool accident occurred. About a quarter of the victims were last seen on the porch or patio or in the yard. Sixteen percent of drownings resulted from barrier compromise or circumvention, and 11% of incidents occurred after the victim was last seen in or near the pool.
- In-ground pools account for the largest percentage (49%) of home pool accident sites, followed by above-ground pools and portable pools.

Isolation fencing is the preferred installation because it provides an additional layer of protection. The [National Drowning Prevention Alliance](#) (NDPA) defines "isolation fencing" as "fencing that completely separates the pool or spa area from the house or other structures. It restricts unauthorized access from neighbors' yards, other nearby buildings, and from inside the house. Isolation fencing is the preferred configuration for pool and spa protection." The NDPA recommends a 5' tall barrier of the isolation fencing type but 54 inches is stated in the BOCA Code. Most areas of the United States still allow a portion of the house to compose part of the pool barrier, but certain precautions are required. As with the pool fence gate, the door providing access to the pool area must open "away from the pool." Section 9.2 of the BOCA code reads in part, "All doors with direct access to the pool through that wall shall be equipped with an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door and its screen, if present, are opened. The audible warning shall commence not more than 7 seconds after the door and door screen, if present, are opened and shall sound continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds. The alarm shall have a minimum sound pressure rating of 85 Dba at 10 feet and the sound of the alarm shall be distinctive from other household sounds such as smoke alarms, telephones, and doorbells." Additionally, alarms that detect motion of the water and retractable pool covers may be mandatory in your area.

Very frequently, installation of the actual in-ground pool itself goes over budget. New pool owners can realize significant savings when opting for a do-it-yourself pool fence installation. Some may even find it very satisfying. Not only is there value in the "sweat equity," but if you take the time to properly plan and carefully install the barrier to meet local standards, the fence will be aesthetically pleasing and provide safety for years to come.

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