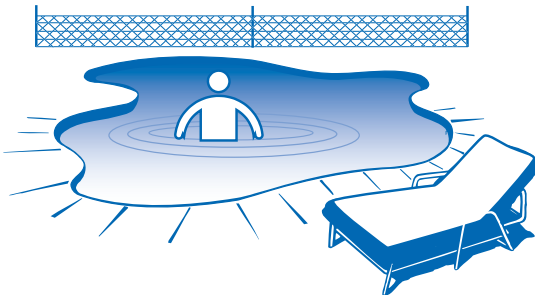


## Pool Owners

- Make pools inaccessible to children unless an adult is directly supervising them. Proper fencing must be constructed in accordance with the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. It is recommended that a house not be considered the fourth side of a fence if it has an opening that gives children access when adults are not present. Use self-closing, self-latching gates as part of the fencing. Make sure the fencing and hardware is maintained and in good condition.
- The Uniform Building Code requires that all pools built since 2006 have an alarm that will sound when a child enters the water. The alarm must sound at the pool and at another location such as inside the house. Doors or windows of a home that open directly into the pool area must sound an alarm when opened.
- Be aware that solar covers may delay the discovery of a submerged child. When checking a pool for a missing child, completely remove the cover.
- Make pool safety a priority. Many drownings occur when people are not aware of the responsibilities that come with owning a swimming pool.



### For More Information, Contact:

**New York State Department of Health  
Bureau of Community Environmental  
Health and Food Protection**  
547 River Street, Room 515  
Troy, NY 12180-2216  
518-402-7600 or 1-800-458-1158  
[www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov)

**New York State Department of Health  
Drowning Statistics**  
[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/  
swimming/drowning\\_statistics.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/swimming/drowning_statistics.htm)

**New York State Department of State  
Building Code Fact Sheet**  
<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/code/pools.htm>

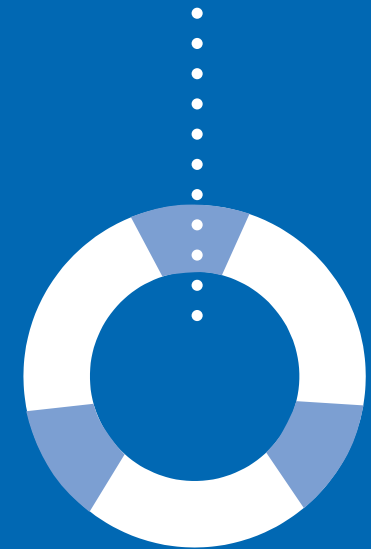
**New York State Office of Parks,  
Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Navigation Law**  
[http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/recreation/  
boating/navigation-law.aspx](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/recreation/boating/navigation-law.aspx)



State of New York  
Department of Health

# When Being Careful Is Not Enough...

## TAKING STEPS TO PREVENT DROWNING



**E**ach year, hundreds of people in New York State drown or are hospitalized for severe injuries that occur while underwater, some of which result in brain damage. New York State Department of Health studies show that:

- Children under age five and teenagers have the highest drowning rates. At public beaches and pools, most drowning victims are between 11 and 25 years old.
- Males are six times more likely to drown than females.
- The drowning rate of African Americans is more than 3 times that of whites.
- Drownings can occur anywhere there is water: from lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, oceans, pools and spas to bathtubs, buckets, drainage ditches, wells and sewers.
- The youngest children usually drowned in pools at home after falling into the water. People of all other ages most often drowned in natural bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and the ocean.
- Drownings were associated with all kinds of watercraft, from motorboats and sailboats to canoes, rowboats, rafts, paddleboats and kayaks. Almost everyone that drowned while boating was not wearing a life jacket or other personal flotation device.
- Almost half of the people who drowned were alone in the water at the time of the incident.
- Of people over age 14, almost half the drownings were associated with alcohol and/or drug use.



## Here's what you can do.

- Never swim alone. Always swim with a “buddy.” Keep an eye on each other. Parents must always watch their children, even when other adults or a lifeguard is present.
- Don't drink alcohol if you are planning to swim or go boating. Alcohol slows reaction time and affects balance and judgment.
- Use extra caution if you or someone with you has a medical condition such as a seizure disorder, diabetes or a heart problem that can cause disability or loss of consciousness while in the water. A change in medication or skipping medication can have disastrous results.
- Be aware that in natural bodies of water, swift current, deep water or a sudden drop off can lead to disaster, even for good swimmers.
- Recognize a drowning person when you see one. Many people think that if someone is not calling for help, that person is not in trouble. Remember that when someone is drowning, he or she is trying to breathe, not speak. It may appear that the person is splashing or waving. Typically, the person thrashes in the water with arms extended, trying in vain to keep his or her head above water. This happens VERY FAST – in as few as 20 seconds. Any delay in rescue can be fatal.

## Boaters



- Make sure every baby, child, teen and adult wears a personal flotation device (PFD) such as a life vest. The PFD should have a Coast Guard approved label, fit snugly and be in good condition. For younger children, look for features such as head support and a strap between the legs. Never rely on plastic rings, water wings or a swim bubble in place of an approved personal flotation device. Choose a PFD that you are willing to wear because it cannot help you if it stays in the boat.
- Be aware of rivers, streams and channels that have low-head dams and waterfalls. Low-head dams are typically man-made structures, six inches to ten feet high, across a river or stream. They can present a special danger, because very strong backwash currents, which may pull people under, are present at the base of the dams and waterfalls.
- Obtain current water and weather conditions in advance when boating.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, whether you are a boat passenger or operator.

