

# The Best Preparation is Prevention

**Preventing an emergency is the best preparation:** Never leave a child alone in or near a swimming pool, spa, or any other body of water!

Remember, it is not just swimming pools that are potentially dangerous. An infant or child can drown in any body of water, including spas and hot tubs. Drownings have also occurred in bathtubs, toilets, and buckets.

Vigilant supervision of infants and children is essential.

## Prepare for an Emergency

Pool-side rescue equipment, including a ring buoy with an attached line and/or a light, strong, rigid pole not less than 12 feet long, should be available to assist in removing the child from the water. This equipment should never be used for play.

Emergency procedures should be clearly written and posted in the pool or spa/hot tub area.

## Credits

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## American Red Cross

### American Red Cross Mission

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

### Training Services Programs

The Red Cross provides a full suite of swimming, water safety, first Aid, and CPR/AED training that helps people enjoy the water safely and skillfully and teaches them how to prevent and respond to emergencies.

### For more information on training and preparedness:

- **Water Safety:** [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety)
- **CPR/AED and First Aid Classes, Online Courses, and Swim Lessons:** [redcross.org/takeaclass](https://www.redcross.org/takeaclass)
- **Healthy Swimming:** [cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming)
- **Pool Spa Safety:** [PoolSafely.gov](https://www.PoolSafely.gov)

### American Red Cross Training Services

Put important safety information in the palm of your hands with these apps:

- **Red Cross Emergency** (Text "GETEMERGENCY"),
- **Red Cross First Aid** (Text "GETFIRSTAID"), and
- **Red Cross Swim** (Text "SWIM") to **90999**.

All are available in app stores and at [www.redcross.org/apps](https://www.redcross.org/apps)



Red Cross materials reflect the standard of knowledge and accepted emergency practices in the United States at the time they were published.



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Visit American Red Cross ([redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)) or  
PHTA ([phta.org](https://www.phta.org)) for more information.



# Pool and Spa Emergency Procedures

# Take Steps to Prevent Accidents

This brochure focuses on guidelines related to preventing drowning accidents and dealing with emergencies related to infants and children. It is designed to give you general guidelines, but it is not intended as, nor can it substitute for skills-based training and assessment in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, and other emergency procedures.

All family members who reside in a home with a swimming pool, spa, or hot tub should become familiar with how to perform CPR for adults, children, and infants. Cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at any time.

The care for children and infants is somewhat different from adults. Therefore, if you have infants and/or children ages 12 and under—or if such children regularly visit your household—it is especially important for you to learn proper emergency procedures, including CPR and first aid.

CPR is the combination of techniques that includes the delivery of hard and fast chest compressions and, when trained and able, the delivery of rescue breaths when a person is unresponsive and not breathing normally.



Training in CPR, including the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and first aid is generally available in local communities from organizations such as the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association. You and your family members have the responsibility and the ability to learn and practice CPR to protect your own children, your friends, and loved ones.

## In Case of Emergency:

- 1. Check the scene for safety.** If the person is in the water, remove them if it is safe to do so.
- 2. Have someone call 9-1-1 and bring the phone to the person's side if possible** (the dispatcher may instruct you how to perform CPR). It is advisable to always have a telephone available close by in the pool or spa/hot tub area.
- 3. The person calling 9-1-1 activates the emergency response system and will be asked a series of questions**, such as the address or location of the incident. The dispatcher will provide the caller with instructions.

### Pediatric Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

These guidelines have been written to help you prepare for what to do if and when a drowning should occur involving an infant or child. In the vast majority of drownings, you can save the life of the infant or child by performing CPR.

## Guidelines for Performing CPR on a Child

If an incident happens, you should first determine if the child is responsive and breathing normally, by seeing if they respond to a shout and tap of the shoulders (bottom of the foot for an infant) while looking at the head and chest for normal breathing (gaspings is not normal and should be considered as not normal breathing). Even if the child is responsive, or if you have any doubts whatsoever, you should immediately call 9-1-1 or the designated emergency number in your area.

If the child or infant does not respond and is not breathing or is only gasping, follow the procedures below.

- 1. Call out for help and stay with the child while someone else calls 9-1-1.** If you are alone and the child is not breathing normally, try two minutes of CPR before leaving the child to call for help. If you have a mobile phone readily available, you may use the speaker phone at the child's side to call 9-1-1, while performing CPR. When drowning is the suspected cause of cardiac arrest, the responder should deliver two initial rescue breaths before starting CPR.
- 2. Position the child on their back, lying flat on a firm surface.** If there is evidence of a head and/or neck injury, use caution in moving the child and keep in mind that the child must be turned as a unit with firm support of the head and neck, so the head does not roll, twist, or tilt.
- 3. Place both hands in the center of the child's chest.** For an infant, place both thumbs (side-by-side) on the center of the infant's chest, just below the nipple line.
- 4. Provide 30 hard and fast chest compressions at a depth of about 2 inches** (about 1 ½ inches for an infant) at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute.
- 5. If trained, pinch the nose and provide 2 breaths with enough air to make the chest begin to rise.** Continue to give 30 compressions followed by 2 breaths until there are obvious signs of life or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrives.