American Red Cross

Water Safety

HANDBOOK

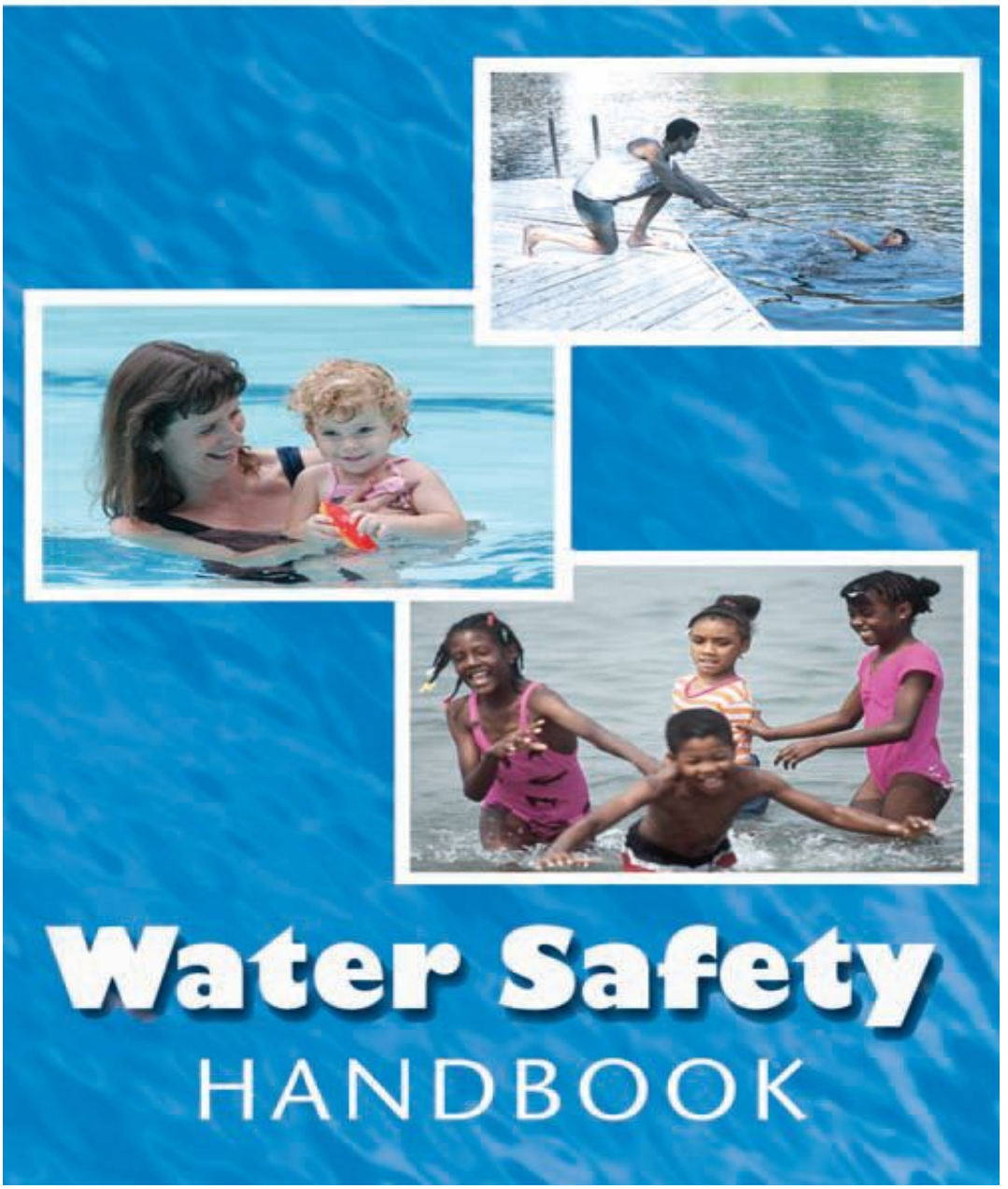
American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life

Get trained.

Learning water safety is just one way you can make your family and your community safer. Your local Red Cross also offers training in other lifesaving skills like first aid, CPR and AED. Learning is easy and gives you skills you can carry with you wherever you go. It's one of the many ways you can prepare yourself, your family and your community for emergencies. When we come together, we become part of something bigger than us all. Sign up for a class today at your local American Red Cross chapter or visit www.redcross.org for more information.

American Red Cross



This handbook was developed and produced through the combined efforts of the American Red Cross, external reviewers and StayWell. Without the commitment to excellence of both employees and volunteers, this handbook could not have been created.

StayWell

StayWell

This book, by itself, does not constitute complete and comprehensive training.

The emergency care procedures outlined in this book reflect the standard of knowledge and accepted emer-gency practices in the United States at the time this book was published. It is the reader's responsibility to stay informed of changes in the emergency care procedures.

The Care Steps outlined within this product are consistent with the Guidelines 2000 for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care.

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MISSION OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

Humanity
Impartiality
Neutrality
Independence
Voluntary Service
Unity
Universality

www.redcross.org

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The Risk of Drowning

Drownings may occur during swimming, boating, hunting, fishing and while taking a bath. Small children can even drown in a bucket of water. Even people who never intended to go into the water are at risk. They may simply fall or slip in and not know what to do.

Children under age 5 and young adults from 15 to 24 have the highest rates of drowning. Most young children who drown do so in home pools, but there are many other kinds of water environments in and around your home. As frightening as the risk of drowning is, it can usually be prevented. Regardless of where you are swimming and what activities you may be involved in, you can follow simple guidelines to reduce the risk of drowning.

The Risk of Head, Neck or Back Injury

Along with the risk of drowning, some water activities also involve the risk of head, neck or back injury. When the injury damages the spinal cord, severe disability is likely, including permanent paralysis. This means the person may never be able to move his or her arms or legs again.

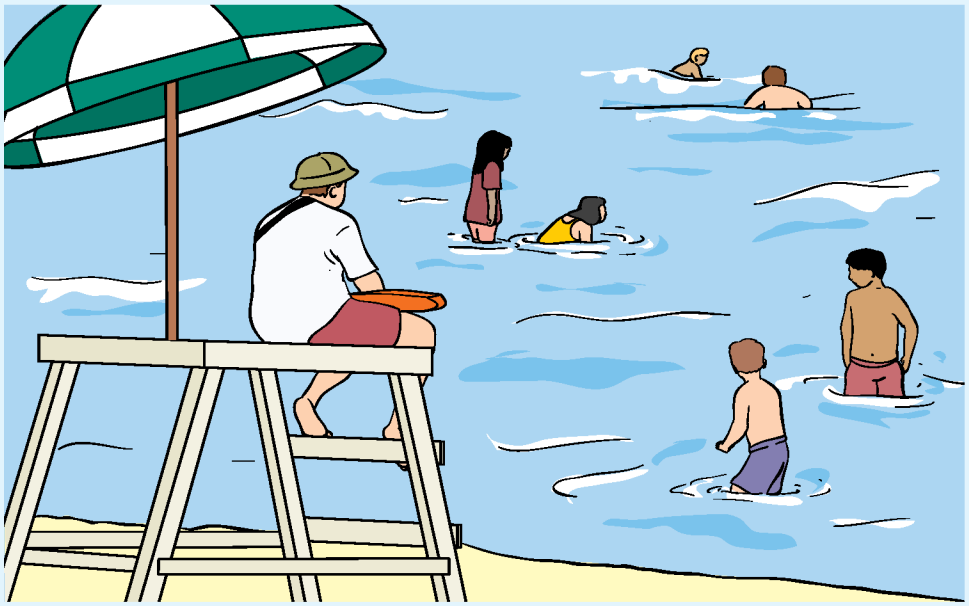
Most injuries to the head, neck or back occur in shallow water. Many involve the use of alcohol or other drugs. Diving into shallow open water, diving from the deck into the shallow end of a pool, diving into above-ground pools and unsupervised diving from starting

blocks cause most diving accidents. No swimmer can be completely safe in inadequately supervised or improperly maintained swimming areas. Some areas simply are not safe for diving, and experienced divers recognize the dangers and do not dive.

Injuries can also result from head-first entry into the surf at a beach, off a pier at a lake, from a cliff into a water-filled quarry or from falling while surfing or boogie boarding. Like drowning, head, neck or back injuries can be prevented by following basic guidelines.

General Water Safety Tips

The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in, on and around the water is to learn to swim. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swimming course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.



Follow these general water safety tips whenever swimming in any body of water (pools, lakes, ponds, quarries, canals, rivers or oceans):

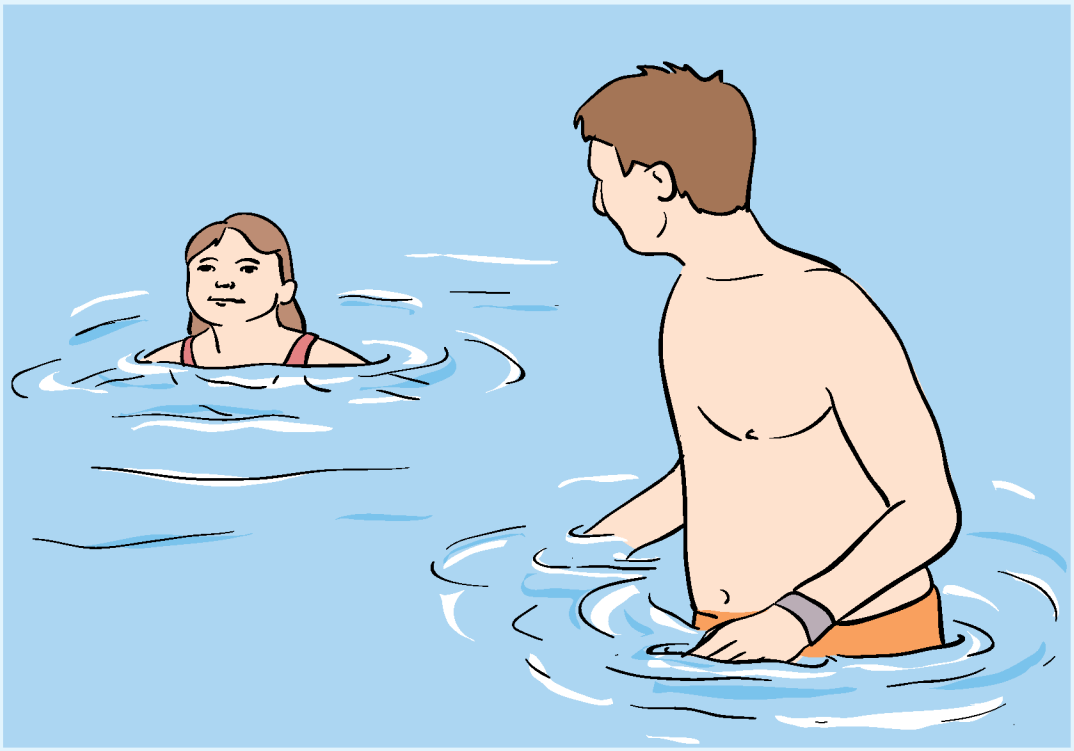
- Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone.
- Read and obey all rules and posted signs.
- Swim in areas that are supervised by a lifeguard.
- Children or inexperienced swimmers should take extra precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket when around the water.
- Watch out for the "dangerous too's"—too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Set water safety rules for your family based on swimming abilities (for example, inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep).
- Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and where the entry and exit points are located. The more informed you are, the more aware you will be of hazards and safe practices.
- Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Enter headfirst only when the area is clearly marked for diving and has no obstructions.
- Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.

ADDITIONAL WATER SAFETY TIPS

Watching Children Around Water

- Maintain constant supervision. Watch children around any water (such as pools, rivers, lakes, bathtubs, toilets and even buckets of water), no matter how well your child can swim and no matter how shallow the water.
- Stay within an arm's reach of an inexperienced swimmer while he or she is in the water.
- Do not rely on substitutes. The use of flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision. Such devices could suddenly shift position, lose air or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.
- Prevent access to water features, such as small ponds and waterfalls.
- Empty kiddie pools immediately after use. Do not leave water in an unattended pool of any kind.
- Use safety locks on toilets and keep bathroom doors closed and toilet bowl covers down if there are small children in your home.
- Empty cleaning buckets immediately after use.
- When visiting another home, check the site for potential water hazards and always supervise your children.
- Teach children to swim by enrolling them in a Red Cross Learn-to-Swim course. Your decision to provide your child with early aquatic experiences is a gift that will have lifelong rewards.
- Family members should participate in a Red Cross water safety course. A water safety course encourages safe practices and provides lifelong safety skills.

- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. Parents and other caregivers, such as grandparents, older siblings and babysitters, should take a CPR and first aid course. Knowing these skills can be important around the water, and you will expand your capabilities in providing care for your child.
- Contact your local Red Cross for further information on enrolling in Learn-to-Swim, water safety and infant, child and adult CPR courses.

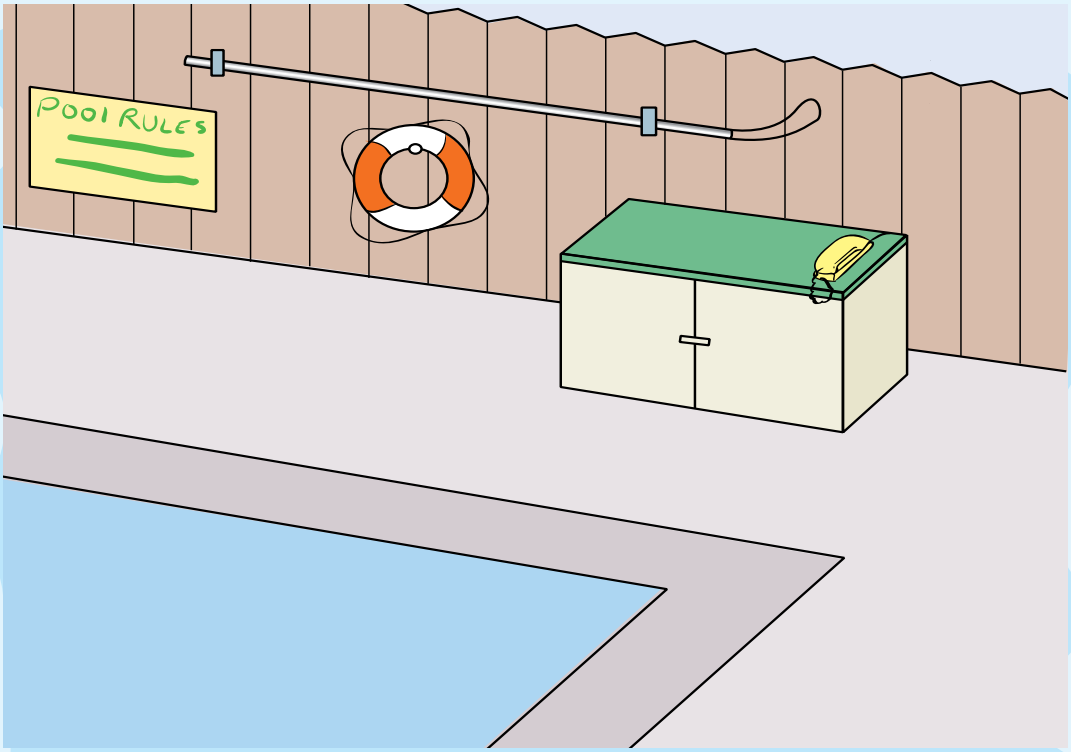


IMPORTANT NOTE

Participation in a Learn-to-Swim program does not "drownproof" your child. It is only the first step in developing your child's water safety and swimming skills. Year-round practice, regular exposure to water and positive encouragement are the tools needed for developing your child's comfort level in water and improving his or her swimming skills.

Home Pools

- Learn to swim—and be sure everyone in the household knows how to swim.
- Never leave a child unattended who may gain access to any water. Even a small amount of water can be dangerous to young children.
- Teach your child not to go near the water without you; the pool area is off limits without adult supervision.
- Adult supervision is essential. Adult eyes must be on the child at all times.
- Enclose the pool completely with a fence with vertical bars (so that it is not easy to climb) that has a self-closing, self-latching gate. Openings in the fence should be no more than 4 inches wide. The house should not be part of the barrier. If the house is part



of the barrier for an existing pool, an additional fence should be installed and the doors and windows leading from the house to the pool should remain locked and be protected with an alarm that produces sounds when the door is unexpectedly opened.

- Post the rules for your pool and enforce them without exception. For example, never allow anyone to swim alone, do not allow bottles or glass around the pool, do not allow running or pushing and do not allow diving unless your pool meets the safety standards.
- Post depth markers and "No Diving" signs, as appropriate. Use a buoyed line to show where the depth changes from shallow to deep. Limit nonswimmer activity to shallow water.

- Never leave furniture or toys near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.
- Keep toys away from the pool and out of sight when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children into the pool.
- Pool covers should always be completely removed prior to pool use and completely secured when in place.
- Have an emergency action plan to address potential emergencies.
- Post CPR and first aid instructions.
- Post the emergency telephone number for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system by your telephone. Keep a telephone near the pool or bring a fully charged cordless or mobile phone poolside. Also post your address and the nearest cross streets so that anyone can read them to an emergency dispatcher.
- Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. A reaching pole, rope and flotation devices, such as ring buoys, rescue tubes and life jackets, are recommended. A well-stocked first aid kit should also be available. Store the safety gear in a consistent, prominent, easily accessed location. A "safety post" may be used.
- Learn Red Cross CPR and first aid. Insist that babysitters, grandparents and others who care for your children know these lifesaving skills.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area.

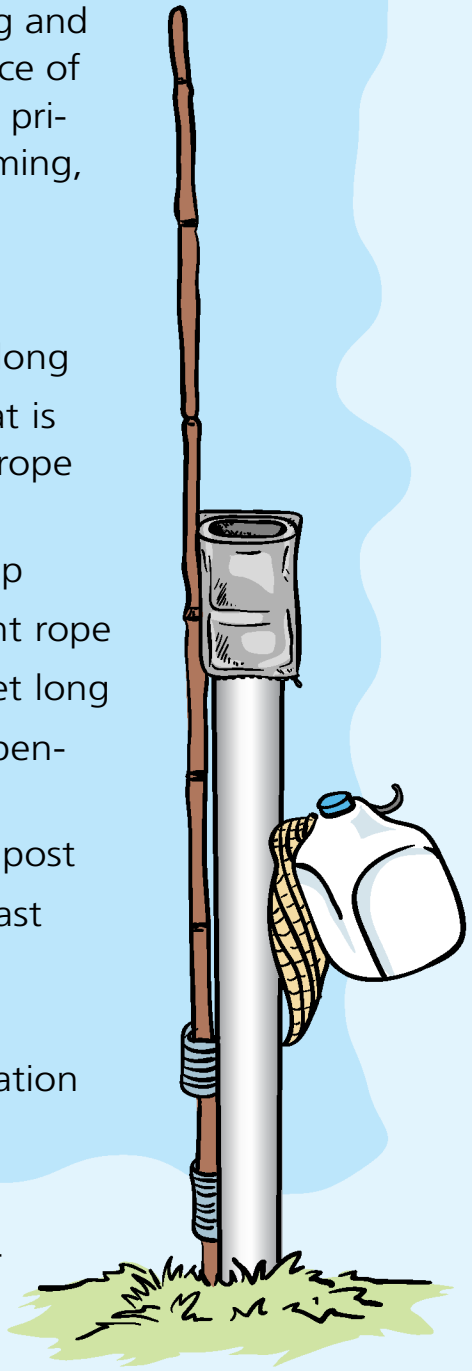
- Keep the pool water clean and clear. Water should be chemically treated and tested regularly. If you cannot clearly see the bottom of the deep end, close the pool. Contact a local pool store or health department for information and instruction.
- Store pool chemicals—chlorine, soda ash, muriatic acid, test kits—in childproof containers and out of children's reach. Clearly label the chemicals. Follow manufacturer's directions and safety instructions.
- Consult the National Spa and Pool Institute, state law and local building codes for pool dimension guidelines to help you establish rules for your pool to ensure safe diving activities. For example:
  - Prohibit all dives into shallow water.
  - Only allow dives from the edge of the pool into deep water.
  - Diving from a diving board should only occur if there is a safe diving envelope (the area of water in front of, below and to the sides of a diving board that is deep enough that a diver will not strike the bottom, regardless of the depth of the water or the design of the pool).
- Make sure your homeowner's insurance policy covers the pool.

DO IT YOURSELF PROJECT:
Make a Safety Post

A safety post holds a heaving jug and a reaching pole. It is a useful piece of equipment for a home pool or a private pond that is used for swimming, boating or ice-skating.

Materials Needed

- ❑ Spike post 4" × 4", 6 feet long
- ❑ Screw-in hanging hook that is large enough to hang the rope and jug on
- ❑ 1-gallon plastic jug with top
- ❑ 40 to 50 feet of lightweight rope
- ❑ Reaching pole 10 to 12 feet long
- ❑ Two 6-ounce cans, each open-ended
- ❑ Nails for attaching cans to post
- ❑ Safety poster or First Aid Fast booklet (optional)
- ❑ First aid kit
- ❑ Emergency contact information
- ❑ Plastic zipper bag



Procedure: Screw in the hanging hook about 1 foot from the top of the post. Nail the two

open-ended cans, one about 1 foot above the other, no lower than 2½ feet from the bottom of the post. Set the post 2 feet in the ground near the water where swimmers, boaters or skaters might get into trouble. Make a heaving jug by putting half an inch of water or sand in the plastic jug and screwing the top on tightly. (If the jug has a snap-on top, secure it with very strong glue.) Tie the rope to the handle of the jug. Hang the jug and the rope on the hanging screw. Put the reaching pole through the open-ended cans. A safety poster, first aid kit, First Aid Fast booklet and emergency contact information can be put into the plastic zipper bag and attached to the top of the post if desired.

Spas or Hot Tubs

- According to the National Spa and Pool Institute, the maximum safe water temperature is 104 degrees F (40 degrees C). Soaking too long at too high a temperature can raise your body temperature over safe limits.
- Spas should be chemically treated and tested regularly. High water temperature can foster bacteria and parasite growth. Check the health department or a local pool or spa store for information.
- Time spent in a spa should be limited to 15 minutes or less.
- Never use a spa or hot tub when drinking alcohol.
- Do not let children of any age use a spa unsupervised.

- Do not allow anyone to play near the drain.
- Children under 5 years of age should not use a spa. Young children are more prone to overheating because their bodies cannot regulate temperature well.
- Pregnant women or people taking medications or who have a chronic medical condition, such as high or low blood pressure, heart disease, seizures or diabetes, should not use a spa or hot tub without their physician's approval.
- Know the location of the emergency cut-off switch.
- When not in use, a hot tub should be securely covered to prevent anyone from falling in.
- After using a spa, always wait at least 5 minutes before swimming. A sudden change in temperature can cause shock.
- Post the emergency telephone number for the EMS system by your telephone. Keep a cordless or mobile telephone near the spa.

Pool Parties

- Make sure that parents or caretakers of all invited guests are aware that the party is a pool party.
- If possible, have a lifeguard on duty. Contact your local parks and recreation department or local swimming pools to get names of American Red Cross–trained lifeguards who are willing to guard at private parties. It is your responsibility to interview and hire individuals and provide all appropriate rescue equipment.
- If you choose not to hire a lifeguard, identify or appoint responsible adults to supervise the pool

when it is being used. These individuals must understand and accept responsibility for monitoring the pool and should be trained in CPR, first aid and water safety.

- Establish rules for safety, such as:
  - Prohibiting all dives into shallow water
  - Walking—no running on the deck
  - Not permitting glass in the pool area
- If the swimming portion of the party goes for more than an hour, set rest breaks. This allows guests the opportunity to rest and warm up and provides a break for the lifeguard or water watcher from watching over the water.
- Do not serve alcoholic beverages to guests who are or will be participating in water activities.
- Maintain cleanliness of water. Water should be chemically treated and tested regularly.
- Check with your homeowner's insurance company to determine the limits of your coverage. You may need additional coverage for the event.

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS:
When Hiring a Lifeguard

This list is intended to provide you with a checklist of questions to ask before you hire a lifeguard to guard your pool. Make sure to go over the list completely and ask for proof of certification prior to the date of hire.

- ❑ Do you have current American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification (or equivalent)?
- ❑ Do you have current CPR certification? If so, through what training agency?
- ❑ Do you have current first aid certification? If so, through what training agency?
- ❑ Do you have a current list of references?
- ❑ Do you have a current job history list?
- ❑ What do you charge per hour?
- ❑ Are there any specific pieces of safety equipment we need to provide for you (rescue tube, ring buoy, reaching pool, backboard with head immobilizer, first aid kit)?
- ❑ How do you enforce pool rules?
- ❑ Do you have a list of rules you require while lifeguarding?
- ❑ Are there any accommodations we need to make for you?

Unsupervised Pools

Unsupervised pools may include hotel, motel, condominium, apartment complex and homeowner's association pools. In addition to the general water safety tips and additional water safety tips, follow these tips when swimming in unsupervised pools:

- Read and obey all posted pool rules.
- Supervise your children at all times. Remember, your children are your responsibility.
- Check for the availability of safety equipment, such as a reaching pole, ring buoy and telephone, and know how to use it.
- Make sure rescue equipment is in good condition.
- Safety equipment should not be used as pool toys.
- Do not rely on inflatables to keep your child safe.
- Take breaks from water activities. This gives swimmers and those supervising them an opportunity to rest.
- Make sure the pool is properly marked with depth indicators.
- Do not swim in a pool that is overly crowded or with swimmers who are not following the rules.
- Do not bring any glass or breakable objects onto the pool deck.
- Check the pool area for obvious hazards (slippery decks, debris on the pool bottom, malfunctioning equipment, drop-offs, cracks in the deck).

- Check to see that fences are in good repair and that gates are self-closing and self-latching. Do not prop gates open or leave furniture near the pool fence that would allow children to easily climb the fence.
- Check for a well-maintained area.
- Check the water conditions. The water should be clear and clean without debris. You should be able to see the drain or the bottom of the pool at the deepest point. It you cannot see the drain or bottom, do not enter the water.

Waterparks

- Be sure the area is well supervised by lifeguards before you or others in your group enter the water.
- Read all posted signs. Follow the rules and directions given by lifeguards. Ask questions if you are not sure about a correct procedure.
- When you go from one attraction to another, note that the water depth may be different and that the attraction should be used in a different way.
- Be aware that some attractions have moving water, such as wave pools, and require swimming skills to be safe.
- Before you start down a water slide, get in the correct position—face up and feetfirst.
- Some facilities provide life jackets at no charge. If you cannot swim, wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.

Lakes and Rivers

- Select a supervised area. A trained lifeguard who can help in an emergency is the best safety factor. Even good swimmers can have an unexpected medical emergency in the water.
- Inexperienced swimmers and young children should wear life jackets.
- Children or inexperienced swimmers should avoid areas where moving water is present.
- Select an area that is clean and well maintained. A clean bathhouse, clean restrooms and a litter-free environment show the management's concern for your health and safety. Water pollution can cause health problems for swimmers.
- Avoid all water activities above and below a dam.
- Avoid possible hazards such as murky water, hidden underwater objects, currents, waves, unexpected drop-offs and aquatic plant life.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Enter headfirst only when the area is marked clearly for diving.
- Be sure rafts and piers are in good condition, with no loose boards or exposed nails. Never swim under a raft or pier. Always look before jumping off a pier or raft to be sure no one is in the way.
- Make sure you always have enough energy to swim back to shore.
- Water that appears calm on the surface may have a current below the surface. Do not underestimate the power of an unseen current. If you are caught in a

current and being swept away, roll over onto your back and go downstream feet first to avoid hitting your head. When you are out of the strongest part of the current, swim straight toward shore. Because of the current, you will actually move downstream at an angle toward the shore.

- A hydraulic is a strong force created by water flowing downward over an object and then reversing its flow. The reverse flow of the water can trap and hold a person under. If you are caught in a hydraulic, do not fight it, but swim to the bottom and then swim out with the current to reach the surface.

Ocean Safety

- Stay within the designated swimming area and within the visibility of a lifeguard.
- Watch out for possible hazards, such as waves, rip currents, longshore currents and other water conditions.
- Check the surf conditions before you enter the water. Look to see if a warning flag is up or check with a lifeguard for water conditions, beach conditions or any potential hazards, especially rip currents.
- Stay away from piers, pilings and jetties when in the water.
- Keep a lookout for aquatic life. Water plants and animals may be dangerous. Before going into any ocean, find out what local marine life may be dangerous, how to avoid it and how to care for any injuries.

- Never dive headfirst into breaking waves. Many swimmers have suffered head, neck and back injuries while diving into waves, not realizing that the water depth was too shallow for a dive.
- Watch for longshore and rip currents. A longshore current moves parallel to the shore. If you are caught in a longshore current, try to swim toward shore while moving along with the current. Rip currents move straight out to sea beyond the breaking waves. If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward shore.

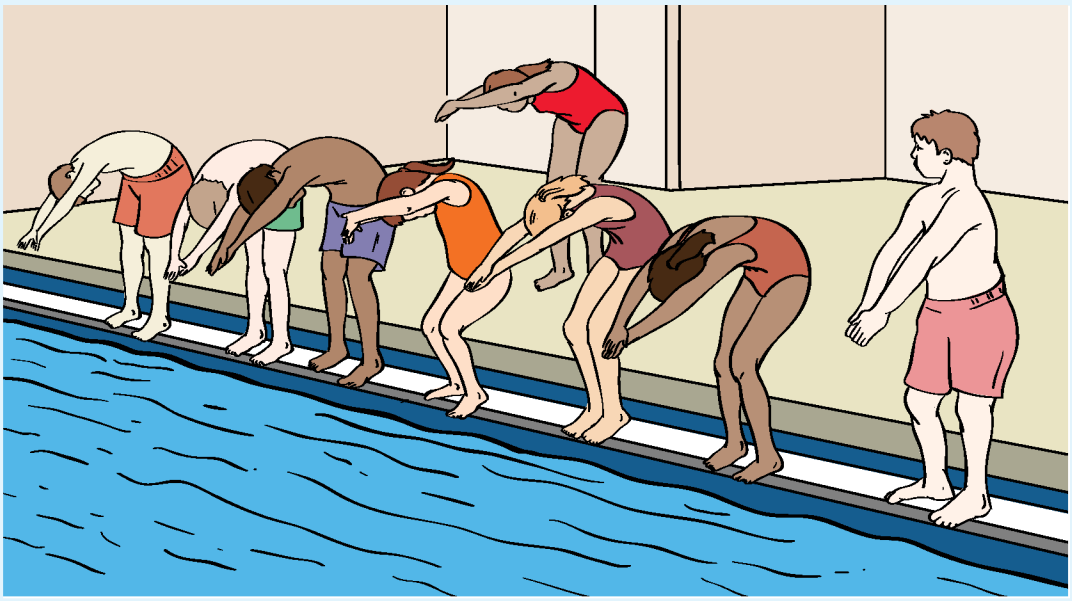
Diving Safety

A head-first entry into shallow water is the leading cause of head, neck or back injuries in the water. The following guidelines are recommended for safe diving:

- Learn how to dive safely from a qualified instructor.
- In a head-first dive, extend the arms with your elbows locked alongside the head. Keep your hands together with thumbs touching (or interlocked) and palms facing toward the water. Keeping the arms, wrists and fingers in line with the head helps control the angle of entry. This reduces the impact of the water on the top of the head and helps protect from injury. A diver's body should be tensed and straight from the hands to the pointed toes.
- Follow safety rules at all times—never make exceptions.
- Do not wear earplugs; pressure changes make them dangerous.

- Obey "No Diving" signs. They are there for safety.
- Be sure of water depth and ensure that the water is free from obstructions. The first time in the water, ease in or walk in; do not jump or dive.
- Never dive into an above-ground pool, the shallow end of any in-ground pool or at a beach.
- Never dive into cloudy or murky water.
- In open water, always check first for objects under the surface, such as logs, stumps, boulders and pilings.
- Check the shape of the pool bottom to be sure the diving area is large enough and deep enough for the intended dive.
- The presence of a diving board does not necessarily mean it is safe to dive. Pools at homes, motels and hotels might not have a safe diving envelope.
- When diving from a deck, the area of entry should be free of obstructions (such as lane lines and kick-boards) for at least 4 feet on both sides. For dives from a 1-meter diving board, you need 10 feet of clearance on both sides.
- Dive only off the end of a diving board. Diving off the side of a diving board might result in striking the side of the pool or entering water that is not deep enough.
- Do not bounce more than once on the end of a diving board to avoid missing the edge or slipping off the diving board.
- Do not run on a diving board or attempt to dive a long way through the air. The water might not be deep enough at the point of entry.

- For springboard diving, use equipment that meets the standards set for competition.
- Do not dive from a height greater than 1 meter unless trained in elevated entry.
- Swim away from the diving board after entering the water. Do not be a hazard for the next diver.
- Never use drugs or alcohol when diving.



Life Jackets

- Anyone who cannot swim well should wear or have a life jacket if they are going to be in, on or around the water.
- Even good swimmers should wear a life jacket when boating or water skiing or if there is any chance of falling or being thrown into the water.

- Although you should always wear your life jacket, it is even more important when the water is cold.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has arranged personal flotation devices into five types. The four wearable types may have permanent flotation or may be inflatable.
  - Type I (offshore life jackets): Designed for boating or sailing on the open ocean, rough seas or on remote waters where a rescue could be delayed. They turn most unconscious wearers in the water from a face-down position to a vertical or slightly tipped-back position.
  - Type II (near shore): Designed for recreational canoeing or sailing in inland waters where a rescue would likely occur quickly. They may help turn an unconscious person in the water from a face-down position to a vertical or slightly tipped-back position. Type II life jackets have less buoyancy than type I life jackets but are more comfortable to wear.
  - Type III (flotation aids): Often used for general boating in calm inland waters or for the specialized activity that is marked on the device, such as skiing, hunting, fishing, canoeing or kayaking. These "float coats" or vests may keep a conscious person in a vertical or slightly tipped-back position. Type III is more comfortable for active water sports than types I and II.
  - Type IV (throwable devices): Flotation devices, such as a buoyant cushion or the ring buoy, are not worn but can be thrown to a victim in an emergency. A buoyant cushion may be used as a seat cushion. These devices do not take the place of wearing a life jacket.

- Type V (restricted-use life jacket): A special purpose device approved for specific activities, such as commercial whitewater rafting and riding personal watercraft, where other types of life preserver devices would be too constrictive or when more protection is needed.

When choosing a life jacket:

- Make sure it is the right type for the right activity.
- Make sure it is approved by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Make sure it fits the intended user. Check the stamp on the life jacket for weight limits.
- Make sure it is in good condition. Check buckles and straps for proper function. Discard any life jacket with torn fabric or straps that have pulled loose.
- Practice putting it on in water and swimming with it on. When you practice, have a companion with you who can help you if you have difficulty.

WHAT NOT TO USE

Inflatables, such as water wings, swim rings and other flotation devices, are not designed to be used as substitutes for U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets or life vests or adult supervision. Swimmers may go beyond their ability and fall off the inflatable, which may lead

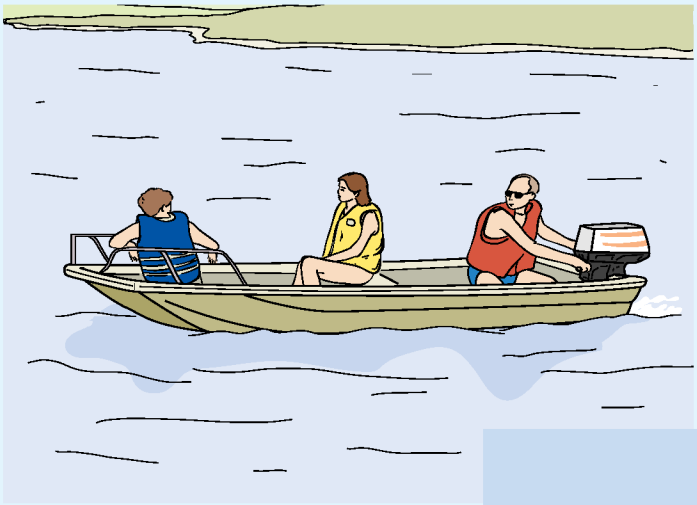
to a drowning situation. Inflatable materials deteriorate in sun and rough pool surfaces, leading to deflation and leaks.

Water Activities and Safety

There are many types of outdoor water activities available for individuals today, such as water skiing, tubing and rafting, personal watercraft, sailboarding, kiteboarding, windsurfing, snorkeling, scuba diving and surfing. In addition to the general water safety tips, follow these tips for water activities.

- Wear a life jacket. Check the label to make sure you and others are wearing U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets.
- Anytime you participate in water activities, give a responsible person details about where you will be and how long you will be gone. This is important because if you become delayed because of an emergency, become lost or encounter other problems, you want help to be able to reach you.
- Know your local laws and regulations and follow them for your safety and the safety of others. Some states have special laws governing the use of personal watercraft—such as jet skis—which address operations, registration and licensing requirements, education, environmental restrictions, required safety equipment and minimum ages.

- Alcohol and water do not mix. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination—more than 50 percent of drownings result from boating incidents involving alcohol.
- Wear a wet suit in cold water to help prevent hypothermia.



- Take lessons from a person qualified in the type of water activity you wish to pursue.
- Ensure equipment is in good condition and functioning properly before participating in the water activity.
- Follow the manufacturer's equipment guidelines and be certain you understand how to properly use the equipment.

In addition, visit governmental agencies, local boating, surf and dive shops, outdoor outfitters and even the Internet to learn more about safety, regulations and educational opportunities.

BOATING

- Many states have mandatory boating education programs.
- Do not ride in a boat being operated by someone who has been drinking.
- Develop a float plan. Anytime you go out in a boat, give a responsible person details about where you will be and how long you will be gone. This is important because if you are delayed as a result of an emergency, become lost or encounter problems with the boat, you want help to be able to reach you.
- Find a boating course in your area (such as the Red Cross, U.S. Power Squadron, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the state boating authority or U.S. Sailing)—these courses teach about navigation rules, emergency procedures and the effects of wind, water conditions and weather.
- Have your boat inspected regularly by your local boating safety authority.

DO IT YOURSELF PROJECT:
Float Plan

Directions: Use the following information to help you develop a float plan specific to your equipment. Be sure to post the float plan near a telephone and provide a copy to a responsible person before your next outing.

Always provide a responsible person with details about where you will be and how long you will be gone. This is important because if you are delayed as a result of an emergency, become lost or encounter other problems, you want help to be able to reach you. If the emergency involves a serious injury or illness, it is crucial that help get there soon.

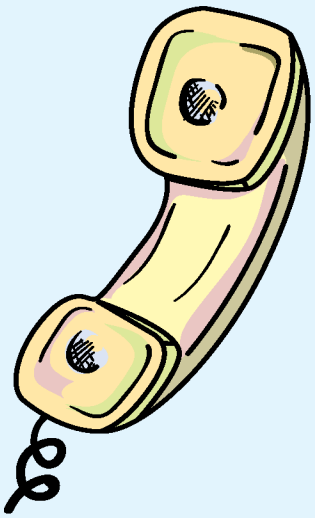
A float plan should include the following information:

- ❑ Boat name and number
- ❑ Boat color, size, make and capacity
- ❑ Number of engines, horsepower and type of fuel used, if any
- ❑ Number of persons on board and their names, addresses and telephone numbers
- ❑ Type of radio equipment on board
- ❑ Departure date, time and location
- ❑ Estimated arrival date, time and location
- ❑ Destination
- ❑ Date and time you want the Coast Guard notified if you fail to reach your predetermined destination

Emergency Action Steps

In the excitement of an emergency, you may be frightened or confused about what to do. Stay calm—you can help. An emergency scene might look complicated at first, but the three emergency action steps will help you organize your response to the situation.

1. Check	Check the scene and the victim. Check the scene for unsafe conditions that would prevent you from helping. Check the victim for consciousness, breathing and signs of circulation.
2. Call	Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
3. Care	Care for the victim. Care for the conditions that you find (first aid, rescue breathing, CPR). Make the victim comfortable until EMS personnel arrive.



Emergency Action Plan

Emergency action plans are detailed plans for how everyone should act in an emergency. It is best to swim in a supervised area where emergency action plans are established. If there is an emergency, follow the lifeguard's instructions. A plan should be established if there is body of water around or near the home, such as a pool, pond or canal. To create a plan:

- Identify types of emergencies that could occur, such as someone falling into the water.
- Identify rescue equipment available, such as a telephone near the body of water, ring buoy with a line attached and reaching pole.
- Create an emergency contact list that includes telephone numbers of emergency medical services and names of the nearest cross streets to your home.

The basic elements of an emergency action plan include:

- An emergency signal. Blow a whistle or horn or wave a flag to alert swimmers that they should leave the water immediately. At a home pool or pond, the signal will tell other family members and neighbors that there is an emergency and help is needed quickly.

- Safety equipment. For the home pool or pond, safety equipment includes a telephone and rescue equipment near the water. Make a safety post for emergency equipment and set it close to the water. The safety post should have a heaving jug or other device, such as a reaching pole, along with a well-stocked first aid kit.
- Emergency procedures. Develop and post procedures for what to do in a water emergency. Emergency procedures must be carefully planned and should outline:
  - Steps a responder should take to remove the victim from danger, without putting the responder in danger.
  - Who, how and where the call to 9-1-1 or the local emergency number is made. Take into account how a mobile phone can access emergency numbers.
  - How EMS personnel are directed to the specific scene of the emergency. For example, someone should be appointed to meet EMS personnel at the street.
  - Who should be contacted, such as the victim's physician and immediate family members.

At home pools or ponds, family and friends should be taught the emergency procedures. Neighbors should also know those procedures to provide assistance if necessary.

DO IT YOURSELF PROJECT:

Emergency Contact Information Sheet

Directions: Complete this information and photocopy this form. Post one sheet by each telephone in your home and carry one with you at all times.

Local emergency telephone number(s):
Police _____ Fire _____

Family name:
Street address:
Home telephone number:
Parent's mobile telephone numbers:
Names of nearest cross streets:
Doctor's name:
Doctor's emergency telephone number:
National Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222
Neighbor's name:
Neighbor's telephone number:
Hospital name:
Medical insurance information:
Child's name and age:
Child's name and age:
Child's name and age:

Any special medical conditions, including allergies for each child or adult:

Health Department telephone number:

Helping Others

There may be a time when someone else is in trouble in the water. Although there are some basic skills you can learn to aid a person in the water, always remember to stay safe. If there is any chance that you cannot easily assist the person in trouble, call for advanced medical help.

THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM

The EMS system is a network of professionals linked together to give the best care for victims in all emergencies, both in and out of the water:

1. The system begins when you or another citizen sees an emergency occurring and takes action.
2. When you call 9-1-1 or the emergency number in your community, the EMS dispatcher takes your information and summons trained professionals to the scene. These may include police or fire personnel, other rescuers and an ambulance and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).
3. These professionals will take over the care of the victim, including transporting the person to a hospital or other facility for the best medical care.

Your role in this system is to recognize the emergency, decide to act and call EMS for help.

RECOGNIZING AN EMERGENCY

An emergency can happen to anyone in, on or around the water, regardless of how good a swimmer the person is or what he or she is doing at the time.

- A strong swimmer can get into trouble in the water because of sudden illness.
- An inexperienced swimmer playing in shallow water can be swept into deep water by a sudden wave.
- The key to recognizing an emergency is staying alert and knowing the signals that indicate an emergency is happening.
- Use all your senses when observing others in, on and around the water. You may see that a swimmer is acting oddly, or you may hear a scream or sudden splash. You may smell an unusual odor, such as a strong chlorine odor, that could indicate a problem.
- Watch for anything that seems unusual.
- Being able to recognize a person who is having trouble in the water may help save that person's life.
- Most drowning people cannot or do not call for help.
- They spend their energy just trying to keep their heads above water.
- They might slip under water quickly and never resurface.
- Two kinds of water emergencies to look for are a swimmer in distress and a drowning person. Each kind of emergency poses a different danger and can be recognized by different behaviors as shown on the following chart.

SIGNALS	BEHAVIORS
Swimmer in Distress • A person who is trying to swim but making little or no forward progress may be in distress. If not helped, he or she may lose the ability to float and become a drowning victim.	• Too tired to get to shore or to the side of the pool • Able to stay afloat and breathe • May call for help • May float, tread water or cling to a line for support
Active Drowning Victim • Active drowning victims have distinctive arm and body positions. They are unable to move or tread water and struggle to keep their mouths above the surface of the water.	• Vertical in the water • Unable to move forward or tread water • Arms are at the side pressing down in an instinctive attempt to keep the head above the water to breathe • All energy is going into the struggle to breathe • Cannot call for help
Passive Drowning Victim • A victim may progress from active to passive drowning or suddenly slip under water without a struggle.	• Not moving • Floating face down on the bottom or near the surface of the water

DECIDING TO ACT

Once you recognize that there is an emergency, you need to decide to act—and how to act. This is not always as simple as it sounds. Often people are slow to act in an emergency because they are not sure exactly what to do or they think someone else will do whatever is needed. What if no one else is there or is taking action? If you decide to act, you may save the person's life.

Once you have decided to act, proceed safely. Make sure the scene is safe—do not go rushing into a dangerous situation where you too may become a victim. If the person is in the water, decide first whether he or she needs help getting out, and then act based on your training. If the person is out of the water, quickly try to determine what help the person needs and check for any dangers to you or others helping. Look for any other victims. Look for bystanders who can help you give first aid or call for help.

CALLING FOR HELP

If the victim is in the water, your first goal is to stay safe yourself. Rushing into the water to help a victim may lead to you becoming a victim too. Once you ensure your safety, your goal is to help get the person out of the water. If the person is unconscious, send someone else to call EMS personnel while you start the rescue. If the person is conscious, you can first act to get the person out of the water and then determine whether EMS is needed.

If the victim is not in the water, as soon as you determine that there is an emergency, call EMS immediately. If you are in doubt about whether the victim needs professional help, do not hesitate—call EMS personnel. The following conditions and situations are serious and require you to call EMS:

- Any drowning or near-drowning situation
- Injury to the head, neck or back
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent chest or abdominal pain or pressure
- No pulse
- Unconsciousness
- Severe bleeding, vomiting or passing blood
- Seizure, severe headache or slurred speech
- Poisoning
- Possible broken bones
- Multiple injuries

Make the call to EMS personnel yourself, or ask someone else at the scene to call. If possible, send two people to make the call. Tell the callers to report back to you and tell you what the dispatcher said.

Be sure the callers stay on the phone after giving all the information to the dispatcher, in case there are any questions. Make sure that the dispatcher has all the correct information to get the right type of help to the scene quickly. Be prepared to tell the dispatcher the following:

- The location of the emergency (exact address, city or town, nearby intersections or landmarks, name of the facility)
- The telephone number of the telephone being used
- The caller's name
- What happened
- The number of victims
- The help being given so far

Remember, do not hang up first, because the dispatcher may need more information.

If you are in a situation in which you are the only person other than the victim, you should *Call First*, that is, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number—before providing care for:

- An unconscious adult or child 8 years old or older
- An unconscious infant or child known to be at high risk for heart problems

Call First situations are likely to be cardiac emergencies, such as sudden cardiac arrest, where time is critical.

Call Fast, that is, provide 1 minute of care, then call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number for:

- An unconscious victim less than 8 years old
- Any victim of submersion or near drowning
- Any victim of cardiac arrest associated with trauma
- Any victim of drug overdose

Call Fast situations are likely to be related to breathing emergencies, rather than sudden cardiac arrest. In these situations, provide support for airway, breathing and circulation through rescue breaths and chest compressions, as appropriate.

Reach or Throw, Don't Go

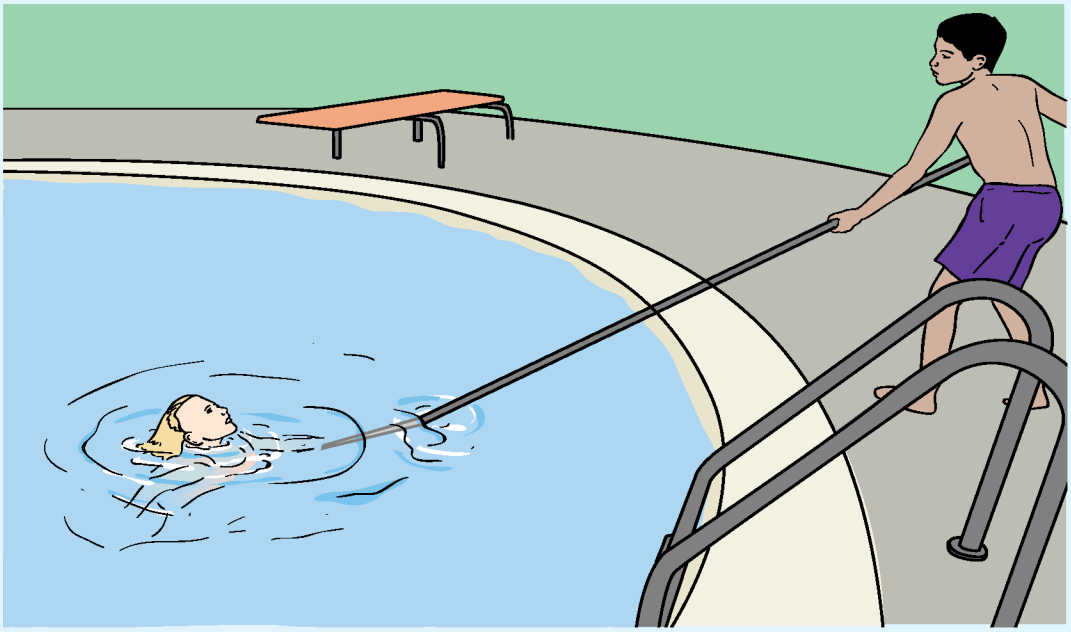
If you see someone who is in the water and needs help, you should use a reaching or throwing assist to help that victim. You should never endanger yourself by going into the water and swimming out to the victim if you are not trained to do so.

REACHING ASSIST

If a victim is close enough, without going into the water yourself, use a reaching assist to help him or her out of the water.

Reaching Assist with Equipment

- Use any object to extend your reach, such as a pole, an oar, a paddle, a tree branch, a shirt, a belt or a towel. If using a rigid object, such as a pole or oar, sweep it toward the victim from the side until it makes contact with an arm or hand. If using a shirt or towel, lie down and flip it into the person's hands.

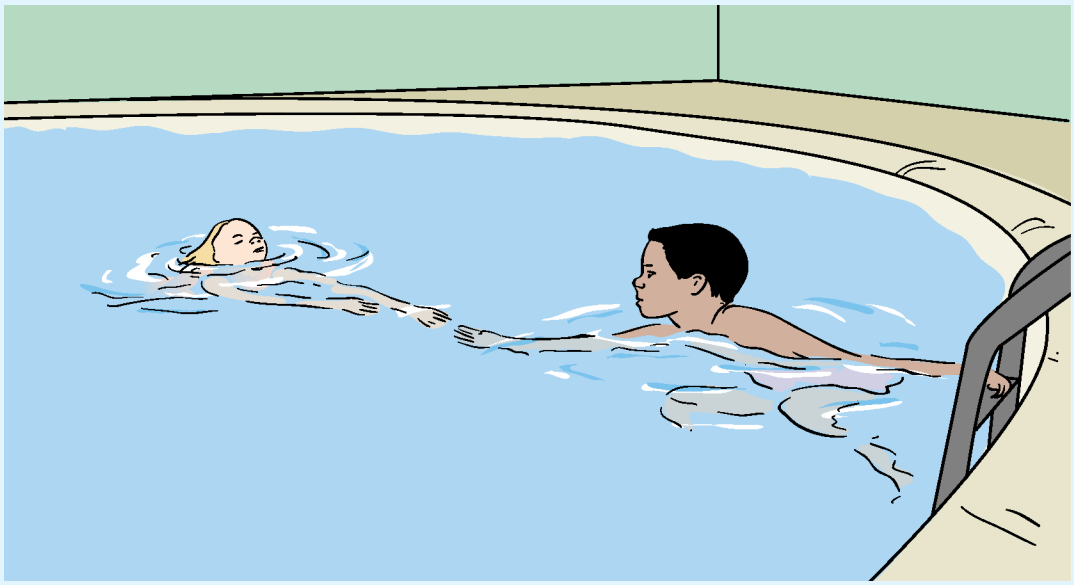


- Follow these steps to keep yourself safe:
  1. Brace yourself on a pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.
  2. Extend the object to the victim.
  3. When the victim grasps the object, slowly and carefully pull him or her to safety. Keep your body low and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water.

Reaching Assist Without Equipment

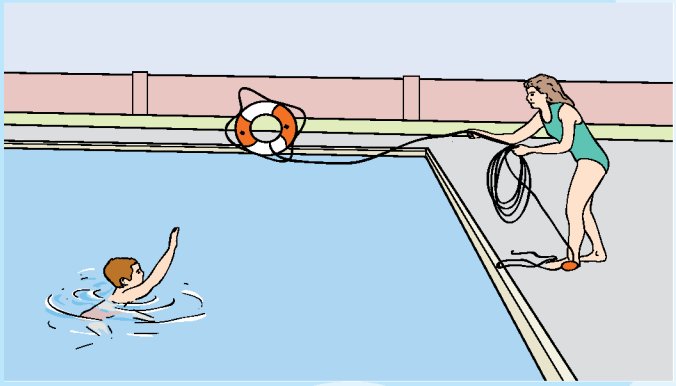
- If there is no equipment available to perform a reaching assist:
  1. Brace yourself on the pool deck or pier surface.
  2. Reach with your arm and grasp the victim.
  3. Pull the victim to safety.

- If already in the water:
  1. Hold on to a pool ladder, overflow trough (gutter), piling or another secure object with one hand.
  2. Extend a free hand or one leg to the victim. Do not let go of the secure object or swim out into the water.
  3. Pull the victim to safety.



THROWING ASSIST

- Use a throwing assist to rescue someone who is beyond your reach in a pool or open-water environment.
- Throw the victim a buoyant object tied to a line. He or she can grasp the object and be pulled to safety.
- Throwing equipment includes heaving lines, ring buoys, throw bags, rescue tubes, homemade throwing devices, such as heaving jugs or any floating object at hand, such as a picnic jug, small cooler, buoyant cushion or extra life jacket.
- To perform a throwing assist, follow these guidelines:
  - Get into a stride position. The leg opposite the throwing arm is forward. This helps maintain balance during the throw.
  - Step on the end of the line with the forward foot. Avoid stepping on the coiled line with the other foot.
  - Shout to get the victim's attention. Make eye contact and say that you are going to throw the object now. Tell the victim to grab it.
  - Bend the knees and throw the object to the victim. Try to throw the object upwind or up current, just over the victim's head, so the line drops within reach.
  - When the victim has grasped



the object or the line, slowly pull him or her to safety. Keep weight low and back. Lean away from the water as you bring the victim to safety.

- If the object does not reach the victim, quickly pull the line back in and throw it again. Try to keep the line from tangling, but do not waste time trying to coil it. If the object is a throw bag, partially fill the bag with some water and throw it again.

- If the throwing assist does not work and the water is shallow enough for wading, try a wading assist with equipment.

WADING ASSIST WITH EQUIPMENT

If the water is safe and shallow enough (not over your chest), you can wade into the water to assist the victim. Do not enter the water if there is a current or if the bottom is soft or you do not know the condition of the bottom. If possible, you should wear your life jacket when attempting a wading assist, and take something to extend your reach. Use a rescue tube, ring buoy, kickboard or a life jacket. You may also reach with a tree branch, pole, air mattress or paddle.

To perform a wading assist with equipment, follow these guidelines:

1. Take a buoyant object to extend out to the victim.
2. Wade into the water and extend the object to the victim.
3. When the victim grasps the object, tell him or her to hold onto the object tightly for support and pull him or her to safety. Keep the object between you and the victim to help prevent the victim from grasping at you in a panic.

Rescue Breathing

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Chest does not rise and fall
- Cannot feel or hear breaths
- Skin appears pale or bluish

WHAT TO DO:

- CHECK the scene and the victim.
- Send someone to CALL 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- Tilt head back and lift chin to open the airway (Fig. 1).
- Look, listen and feel for breathing for about 5 seconds.

If the victim is breathing but remains unconscious:

- Place the victim on the side in case he or she vomits, and monitor breathing and signs of circulation.

Fig. 1

IF THE VICTIM IS NOT BREATHING:

- Pinch victim's nose shut, open your mouth wide and make a tight seal around the victim's mouth. (For an infant, both the mouth and nose are covered with your mouth.)
- Give two slow breaths, until the chest clearly rises (Figs. 2 and 3).
- Check for movement (coughing or response to breaths) for about 10 seconds.

Fig. 2

If the victim is NOT breathing but shows some movement (coughing, movement or response to breaths):

- Perform rescue breathing.
  - Adult: Give one slow rescue breath about every 5 seconds.
  - Child or infant: Give one slow rescue breath about every 3 seconds.

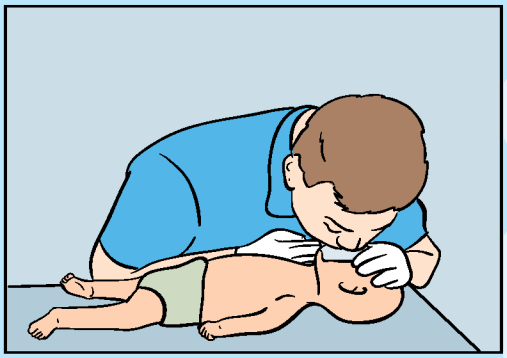


Fig. 3

- Recheck for breathing and movement about every minute.

If you suspect a head, neck or back injury use the jaw-thrust maneuver when checking breathing and giving breaths:

- Place one hand on each side of the victim's head with your thumbs on the victim's cheeks and your fingers under the back of the lower jaw, next to the ears.
- Grab the back of the lower jaw, next to the ears, and lift with both hands.
- If you can maintain a clear, open airway, do not move the victim unnecessarily.
- If you give rescue breaths, place your cheek tightly against the victim's nose.

DROWNING

WHAT TO DO:

- Send someone to CALL 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- Attempt to rescue by reaching or throwing an object that floats to the person. DO NOT ATTEMPT A SWIMMING RESCUE UNLESS YOU HAVE PROPER EQUIPMENT AND ARE TRAINED TO DO SO.

ONCE THE VICTIM IS OUT OF THE WATER:

- CHECK the person, CARE for any conditions you find.

Tilt the head back and lift chin and CHECK breathing. Check the mouth for fluid or objects.

If the victim is not breathing and the airway appears clear:

- Pinch the victim's nose and give two slow breaths, until the chest clearly rises.
- Check for movement (coughing or response to breaths) for about 10 seconds.
- Perform rescue breathing.

For additional information on first aid and CPR, contact your local Red Cross chapter to enroll in a course.

General Health Tips for Outdoor Water Activities

PROTECTING YOUR SKIN

- Too much sun can lead to sunburn, skin cancer and premature aging.
- Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Remember also to use a lip balm with an SPF of 15 of higher.
- Children and individuals with light complexion may need an SPF higher than 15.
- Use a water-resistant sunscreen if you are going to be in the water.
- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before entering the water.

- Wear wide-brimmed hats and shirts and use umbrellas to limit your exposure to ultra-violet (UV) rays.
- Reapply sunscreen as recommended by the manufacturer.

PROTECTING YOUR EYES

- Wear polarized sunglasses that absorb at least 90 percent of UV sunlight. Polarized sunglasses are like sunscreen for your eyes and protect against damage that can occur from UV rays.
- When swimming, wear properly fitting goggles to protect your eyes from the water and chemicals.
- Goggles should not be used for submerging deeper than 3 to 5 feet. A properly fitted mask should replace goggles for submerging deeper than 3 to 5 feet.
- Goggles or masks should never be worn when jumping or diving from a diving board.

PROTECTING YOUR EARS

- To get the water out of your ears after swimming, try one of the following:
  - Shake your head or tilt your head and hop up and down.
  - Aim a hair dryer on a low setting toward your ear.
  - Lie on your side with the ear down so that the water will drain out.
- Use eardrops to help dry the ear canal after swimming.
- If you swim frequently, wear a swim cap or wet suit hood, especially for surfing or sailboarding. This can help prevent ear problems caused by exposure to wind and cold water.
- Do not use wax-type earplugs. They may damage the ear canal and make infection more likely. Silicone earplugs provide better protection.
- Do not use earplugs when snorkeling or during other underwater activities. They interfere with the ability to "clear the ears" during descent and ascent.
- If you continue to experience discomfort, ask your doctor how to flush out your ears using warm water and an ear syringe.
- Do not scratch or put anything into your ears.
- Children who have ear tubes should follow the directions of their doctor.

PROTECTING YOUR FEET

- Wear foot protection at waterfronts or beaches. Feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand or debris in the water.
- After being in the water, thoroughly dry your feet, including gently wiping between the toes.

MUSCLE CRAMPS

- Muscle cramps occur when your muscles become tired or cold from swimming or other activity.
- If you get a muscle cramp in shallow water:
  - Try to relax the muscle by stopping the activity or changing the swimming stroke.
  - Change the position of the limb to stretch the cramped muscle and massage the area to relieve the cramp.
- For a muscle cramp in deep water:
  - Take a deep breath, roll forward face down and float.
  - Extend your leg and flex your ankle or toes.
  - Massage the cramp.

HEAT- AND COLD-RELATED EMERGENCIES

Exposure to extreme heat or cold can make a person ill. A person can develop a heat- or cold-related illness even when temperatures are not extreme. Whether such emergencies occur also depends on the person's physical activity, the wind, humidity, general working or living conditions and age and state of health.

Once the signals of a heat- or cold-related illness appear, the victim's condition can quickly get worse and even lead to death. The chart on the following pages lists the signals and care to give victims of heat- and cold-related emergencies.

- Move the victim to a cool place.
- Loosen tight or remove perspiration-soaked clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths to the skin or mist with cool water and fan the victim.
- If conscious, give cool water to drink.

Heat-Related Emergencies

SIGNALS	CARE
Heat Cramps • Painful muscle spasms, usually in the legs and abdomen	• Have the victim rest in a cool place. • Give cool water to drink. • Lightly stretch and gently massage the muscle. • DO NOT GIVE SALT TABLETS. • Watch for signals of heat illness.

SIGNALS	CARE
Heat Illness Early Stages: • Cool, moist, pale or flushed skin • Headache, nausea, dizziness • Weakness, exhaustion • Heavy sweating	• Move the victim to a cool place. • Loosen tight or remove perspiration-soaked clothing. • Apply cool, wet cloths to the skin or mist with cool water and fan the victim. • If conscious, give cool water to drink.
Late Stages: • Red, hot, dry skin • Changes in level of consciousness • Vomiting	If the victim refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness: • Send someone to CALL 9-1-1 or the local emergency number and place the victim on his or her side. • Continue to cool by placing ice packs or cold packs on the victim's wrists, ankles, groin, neck and in the armpits. • If the victim becomes unconscious, give rescue breathing or CPR if needed.

Cold-Related Emergencies

SIGNALS	CARE
Hypothermia • Shivering • Numbness • Glassy stare • Apathy • Weakness • Impaired judgment • Loss of consciousness (in late stage of hypothermia)	• CHECK the scene and the victim. • Send someone to CALL 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. • Gently move the victim to a warm place. • Give rescue breathing or CPR if needed. • Remove any wet clothing and dry the victim. • Warm the victim SLOWLY by wrapping in blankets or by putting dry clothing on the victim. Hot water bottles and chemical hot packs may be used when first wrapped in a towel or blanket before applying. • DO NOT WARM THE VICTIM TOO QUICKLY, such as immersing him or her in warm water. Rapid warming can cause dangerous heart rhythms.

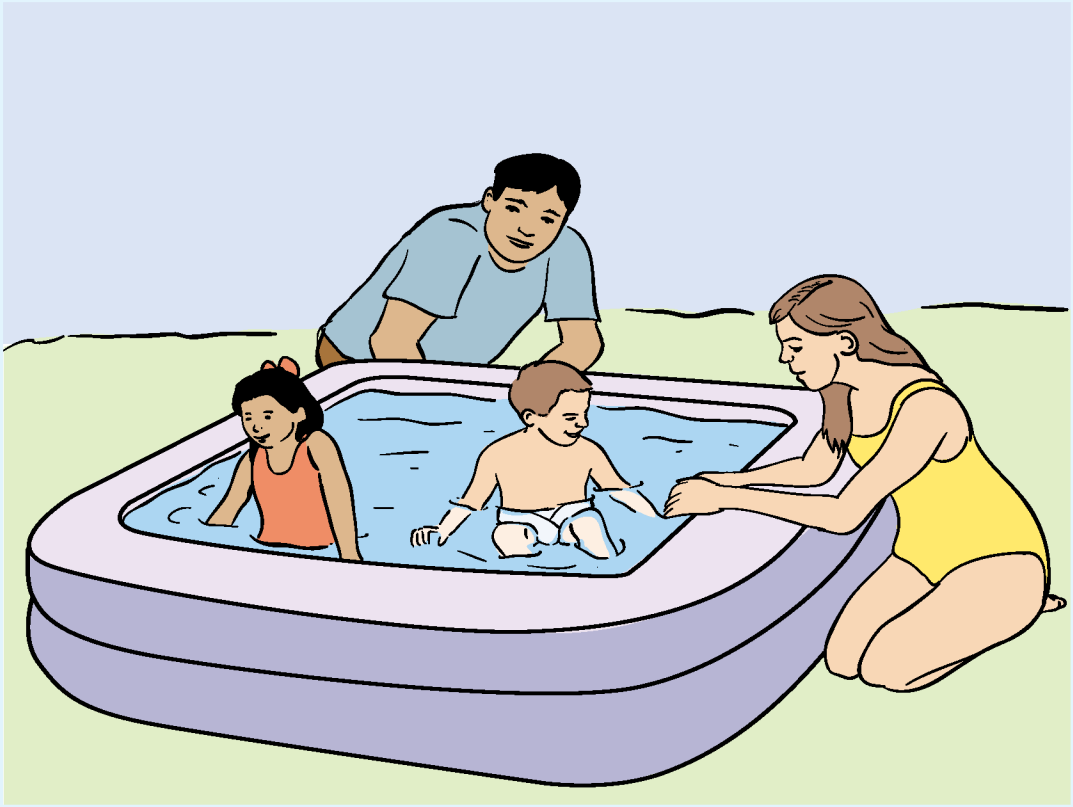
SIGNALS	CARE
Frostbite • Lack of feeling in the affected area • Skin appears waxy, is cold to the touch or is discolored (flushed, white, gray, yellow, or blue)	• CHECK the scene and the victim. • Send someone to CALL 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. • Attempt to remove jewelry or restrictive clothing. • Handle the area gently; never rub the affected area. • Warm gently by soaking affected area in warm water (100 degrees F to 105 degrees F) until it appears red and feels warm. • Loosely bandage area with dry, sterile dressing. • If the victim's fingers or toes are frostbitten, place dry, sterile gauze between them to keep them separated. • Avoid breaking any blisters.

PROTECTION AGAINST RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESSES

SIX "P-L-E-As" FOR HEALTHY SWIMMING*

You Can Choose to Swim Healthy!

Healthy swimming behaviors are needed to protect you and your children from recreational water illness and will help stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place.



*http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/6_pleas.htm

Here are six "P-L-E-As" that promote healthy swimming:

THREE "P-L-E-As" FOR ALL SWIMMERS

- Please do not swim when you have diarrhea...this is especially important for children in diapers. You can spread the germs in the water and make other people sick.
- Please do not swallow the water in which you are swimming. In fact, try your best to avoid even getting water in your mouth.
- Please practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.

THREE "P-L-E-As" FOR PARENTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Follow these "P-L-E-As" to protect your child and others from getting sick and to help keep recreational water illnesses out of your community:

- Please take your children on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late.
- Please change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can transfer to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread illness.
- Please wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming. We all have invisible amounts of fecal matter on our bottoms that end up in the pool.

Does she have the skills to care for your child?

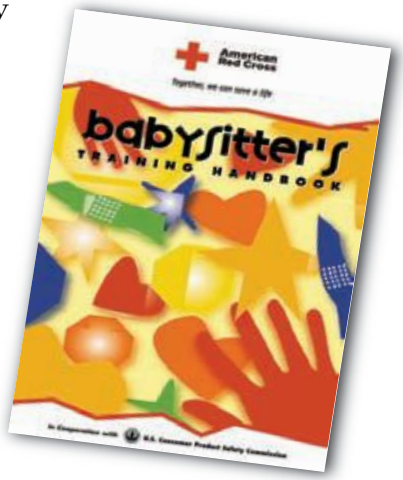
You bet she does.

She took the American Red Cross **Babysitter's Training Course.**
She's never been more confident.

Trust the American Red Cross—the nation's recognized leader in health and safety training—to give your child the skills to provide safe, quality care. Babysitter's Training is an eight-hour course specially designed for today's youth, ages 11 to 15, set in a fun, interactive environment that promotes confidence and competence.

The training includes:

- Essential decision-making and care-giving skills
- First aid and care skills practice
- Skills to manage real-life problems and emergencies
- Babysitting job-finding skills
- Babysitter's Handbook, a valuable resource to take to the job



American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life

For more information about this and other training courses, including first aid, CPR, automated external defibrillation (AED), lifeguarding, swimming and water safety, contact your local American Red Cross chapter, visit our website at www.redcross.org or call 1-800-667-2968.

Make Sure Your Child Learns to Swim

from the Most Trusted Name in Aquatic Training.

The American Red Cross has been the leader in aquatics training for more than 90 years. You won't find a more complete program that addresses the needs of swimmers at all levels—from beginners to advanced—and at all ages. Whether you're looking for an aquatics program for yourself or your family, we have an affordable course that meets your needs.

Parent and Child Aquatics

Developed for children 6 months to 5 years of age and their parents, Parent and Child Aquatics builds swimming readiness by emphasizing fun in the water.

Learn-to-Swim

The prerequisite for each level of Red Cross Learn-to-Swim is successful demonstration of the skills learned in the preceding level. Beginners start at Level 1, which has no prerequisite.

Level 1: Introduction to Water Skills
Helps students feel comfortable in the water and enjoy the water safely.

Level 2: Fundamental Aquatic Skills
Gives students success with fundamental skills.

Level 3: Stroke Development
Builds on the skills in Level 2 by providing additional guided practice.

Level 4: Stroke Improvement
Develops confidence in the strokes learned and improves other aquatic skills.

Level 5: Stroke Refinement
Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes.

Level 6: Swimming and Skill Proficiency
Refines the strokes so students swim them with ease, efficiency, power and smoothness over greater distances. Level 6 is designed with "menu" options that focus on preparing students with a variety of activities. Options include: Personal Water Safety, Lifeguard Readiness, Fundamentals of Diving and Fitness Swimmer.

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