Don’t become a statistic. R.E.S.P.E.C.T. the water.

The Association of Aquatic Professionals is committed to helping prevent drownings nationwide. We believe with a little education and training, learning to RESPECT the water and prevent drowning tragedies is within our reach.

Our approach is as simple as R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

**Recognition:** Recognize the signs of non-swimmers, tired swimmers, distressed swimmers and potentially unsafe situations.

**Education:** Learn what factors can lead to drowning.

**Supervision:** Direct, constant supervision is key.

**Physical Barriers:** Provide fencing, safety covers, alarms and life jackets.

**Expectations:** Understand what to expect from the aquatic environment, the body’s response and know your limits.

**Communication:** Warn and inform family, friends and guests about the dangers that are present in, on and around the water.

**Training:** Learn to swim and how to respond to an emergency.

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Help us protect our greatest asset.

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Association of Aquatic Professionals

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A not for profit association by aquatic professionals for aquatic professionals.
Simply stating what behaviors are unacceptable can lead to a drowning or even worse, a death. A drowning can occur very quickly. If you don’t see it, nothing else matters. Supervision is a key component of drowning prevention.

Recognition:

Can you recognize behaviors that can lead to drowning? Learning how to spot non-swimmers, distressed swimmers, and actively distressed swimmers can help prevent drowning fatalities.

• The signs of non-swimmers are typically universal. Look for swimmers who maintain direct contact with the pool perimeter, those who avoid submersion and/or fervently wipe their eyes after submersion, or those who keep their noses pointed up and away from the water. Non-swimmers may also attempt to doggy paddle but have no forward movement and/or excessive splashing.

• Even good swimmers can get tired. Identifying tired swimmers before their situation escalates can be a powerful drowning prevention tool. These swimmers can be identified when forward movement slows or stops, body position changes (horizontal to diagonal), arms that drag in the water, or simply flushed and tired facial expressions.

• Some signs of active drowning are as follows: the head is back with a vertical body, flailing arms making an attempt to push the body up, no kick or a non-supportive kick, and the potential inability to call for help.

• Scared eyes. If someone is truly scared, their eyes will reveal it. Someone in distress or actively drowning will more than likely be frightened and show it in their eyes.

Education:

There are many factors that can lead to a drowning situation. Educating yourself about these factors can help prevent a tragedy from occurring.

• Drowning is a real threat. No one is ever “drown proof”. Educate yourself about the statistics.

• Know the water you are in. Environmental influences such as wind, rip currents, swift water, cloudy water, entrapment hazards, etc. can all contribute to a drowning. Educate yourself and loved ones about the hazards present in all types of water such as pools, spas, oceans, lakes, rivers and even ditches.

• Learn about the physical factors that can lead to drowning. Physical influences such as breath holding, alcohol consumption, dehydration, cold/hot exposure, etc. can lead to a drowning situation. Being aware of these factors and taking steps to avoid them can help save a life. Go to www.aquaticpros.org to learn more about these factors.

Supervision:

If you don’t see it, nothing else matters. Supervision is a key component of drowning prevention.

• There is no substitute for direct, constant supervision. Fencing, alarms, life jackets and other physical barriers/safety devices are important, but not a replacement for constant, adult supervision.

• Parents/caregivers are the primary means of supervision. The facility staff are secondary to direct supervision from the responsible adult. This also applies to small groups such as day camps and other youth groups. These groups should follow the facilities standards for adult to child ratio.

• A drowning can occur very quickly. Distracted “supervision” – i.e., texting, reading, socializing, etc. can lead to a drowning or even worse, a death.

• Participate in active supervision. Do not watch from the deck! Actively participate with children in the water to provide constant supervision.

• For older kids, parents and caregivers should be designated “check-in” time. This allows some supervisory control even though these youth may be able to swim and be in the facility alone.

Expectations:

Look, know, and understand what to expect from the aquatic environment; it can help you save a life.

• Know and understand the water you are in. Ranging from pools to oceans, all bodies of water have their own inherent risks. Knowing these risks and what to expect can help you better prepare for a safe experience. Posted signs can help you understand the actual and potential dangers and what to expect at what an aquatic venue.

• Know your body. Knowing and understanding physical limitations can help keep you from becoming too tired, too hot or cold, or straying too far from safety. It is also crucial to help children know and understand their limitations.

Communication:

Do your part to communicate the dangers associated with water. Failure to communicate dangers can result in dire consequences.

• Actively communicate the importance of safety in an aquatic environment.

• Post signs. Make sure to identify potential dangers and hazards your family, friends and guests need to know about.

• Communicate with family, friends and guests about expectations while participating in aquatic activities. Simply stating what behaviors are unacceptable can prevent an incident from occurring. (Don’t let your buddy swim alone or drink and swim or jump in when it is unknown depth, etc.)

Training:

Knowledge is a power! Learning what to do before it happens can help you save a life.

• Learn to swim. Visit your local swim facility for swim lesson information and to register for classes. (Most programs offer adult lessons too!) Swim lessons are a great way to train your children early about water safety.

• Make water safety practices a part of your family’s culture. Talk to your children often about water safety and enroll them in learn to swim classes at an early age.

• Understand the equipment. Learn what the aquatic safety equipment is designed for and when and how to properly use it.

• Have a plan! Educate yourself and your loved ones about how to respond to an emergency. There are many organizations that teach basic water safety and rescue skills like CPR. Make sure you use a nationally recognized certification body.

Physical Barriers:

Studies show two primary reasons children drown in swimming pools is lack of supervision, and also a lack of the appropriate physical barriers to protect them.

• Providing fencing and locking gates. This is a simple and efficient way to secure an aquatic facility and it’s the law. Know and abide by your state, county, and local regulations regarding access control to help prevent drowning potential. Go to www.aquaticpros.org for more information.

• Use a pool/spa safety cover when not in use. Providing a safety cover for the pool or spa can inhibit unsupervised use.

• There are many safety alarms on the market. These alarms can detect motion in and out of the water, door/gate opening, and even an alarm that can be secured directly to a child that detects moisture. Investing in alarms appropriate to your aquatic setting can help prevent a drowning from occurring.

• Use life jackets. Life jackets can be used as a secondary layer of protection for novice swimmers. Remember, nothing should replace direct, constant supervision. Each person should have a coast guard approved flotation device when boating.

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For more information about RESPECT, go to www.aquaticpros.org.