

# The Importance Of Pool Safety



With the summer months upon us, it is time to say goodbye to the cold, rainy days, and say hello to time spent by the pool. Though summer may come with fun in the sun, it is important to refresh your memory on the importance of pool safety.

Within the first weeks of summer, families in Ontario have unfortunately been reminded of the importance of pool safety. Tragically, within a week of each other, two children have died in drowning incidents in backyard pools. Backyard pools may be fun and convenient, but they pose an added risk with the usual lack of a trained lifeguard. If you own a backyard pool, it is your responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure water safety. Taking preventative steps to encourage water safety will allow you to continue your favourite summer activities with peace of mind.

## **Ontario Pool Safety Laws and Regulations and Understanding Liability in Pool Accidents**

Every municipality has different regulations and bylaws when it comes to owning a pool. So, before you decided to install one, it is important to check with the regulations of your municipality. However, regardless of where you live, every pool owner has the same responsibility: to ensure the safety of all guests.

The Ontario Lifesaving Society determined that an average of 555 people will require medical treatment due to a non-fatal drowning each year. Additionally, an average of 152 people die, and 98 people are hospitalized because of drowning related incidents per year.

When hosting a pool event, make sure to take all possible precautions to promote pool safety. To ensure your summer is filled with fun, follow the water safety tips below, and make sure to share them with your friends and loved ones!

## **Essential Water Safety Tips**

Promoting water and pool safety is easy, especially when following the below tips. Implementing extra precautions can help keep guests safe and ensure you are not negligent when hosting a pool party.

***Implement and enforce pool rules***

Every pool owner should implement rules to encourage pool and water safety, such as no running around the pool, no diving, and always swim with a buddy. Have these rules posted and ensure all pool users are aware of them before they are allowed to use the pool. Creating and enforcing rules can help provide peace of mind while by the water.

### ***Always have access to life saving devices, a working phone, and a first aid kit***

Regardless of how safe you are, there is always a chance an accident can happen. That is why it is extremely important to always have access to life saving devices, a working phone, and a first aid kit. These devices can be monumental if an accident were to occur.

### ***Create a safety checklist***

Creating a safety checklist will help with maintaining pool safety. This checklist can become especially useful when there are many people at the pool.

The Life Saving Society has created a safety checklist for pool owners to ensure everyone is being safe while enjoying the summer months spent by the pool!

### ***Install fencing around backyard pools***

Elect to completely fence in your backyard pool to divide the backyard from the pool area. In Ontario, pool owners are required to fence in the pool whether that be the pool itself, or the entire backyard. Many pool owners only install three-sided fences and use their home as the fourth wall. Electing to fence in the entire area around the pool with four walls adds an extra layer of protection. Installing a fence around the perimeter of the pool has been seen to significantly reduce the occurrence of accidental drownings.

### ***Supervise at all times***

Supervision is crucial when near any body of water, especially when at backyard pools. Ensuring there is someone supervising all users of the pool is crucial to pool safety. Make a supervising schedule beforehand so that it is guaranteed someone is there to supervise. This is especially important when there is a large crowd. In crowds it is easy to lose site or get distracted, but having a supervising schedule can help ensure someone is always actively watching.

### ***Teach children how to swim***

The easiest way to prevent accidental drownings is to teach children how to swim. Knowing how to swim is a life skill that every child should learn. The Canadian Red Cross offers swimming lessons across Ontario for everyone. Regardless of your age, it is never too late to enroll in swimming lessons!

### ***Keep the pool covered when not in use***

Covering your pool is an added safety measure that should be taken, regardless of whether it is pool season or not. This can help ensure that no one accidentally falls into the pool. Like having a fence around the pool, keeping your pool covered when not in use provides an ease of mind to help ensure there are no accidents.

### ***Never swim alone***

Implement the buddy system. Regardless of whether you are an experienced or novice swimmer, the buddy system is an easy way to implement water safety. Having a buddy can also aid in supervision. If swimming with a buddy, there is always someone who has their eyes on you, ensuring that you are okay. If help is required, a buddy can help get that help.

### ***Wear a life jacket***

Children and new swimmers should always be instructed to wear a life jacket. There is always a risk of accidentally falling into the water. Wearing a life jacket will provide extra support. Even with a life jacket, it is always important to be cautious when near water.

### ***Be mindful of the time of day and weather***

Check the weather before you decide to spend the day by the pool. If it looks like its going to rain, it is recommended you do not participate in water activities.

Time of day should also be considered. The more visible time of day, the better. Avoid swimming in the dark and if you are to swim at night, ensure there is ample light available both in the pool and on the deck.

For more information on ways you can implement water safety, The Canadian Red Cross has provided a number of resources for pool and water safety.

## **Seeking Legal Help and Compensation**

Regardless of how many precautions are taken, there is always a chance of an accident. If you or a loved one are a victim of a pool accident, it is important you know the potential legal routes you can take. If the pool owner is found negligent, there is a possibility for compensation for damages sustained. Every case is different, so it is important to reach out to an experienced personal injury lawyer to assist in understanding the legal options you may have.

The best way to promote pool and water safety is through awareness. Being aware of the potential risks will help ensure pool owners and users take the proper precautions. Regardless of the situation, it is crucial that you take the necessary safety measures. Know the risks of swimming and learn how to prevent them. This way you can go out and enjoy the summer months by the water!

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