

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Office of Information and Public Affairs

Washington, DC 20207

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 19, 2005
Release #05-178

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As Summer Begins, CPSC Warns about Drowning Dangers

Agency Highlights Pool and Spa Drain Entrapment "Hidden Hazard"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With Memorial Day coming and many people getting ready for summer fun at the pool, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is reminding parents and caregivers of several key steps that will help protect children from drowning hazards in pools and spas.

CPSC reports there are about 250 drowning deaths of children under 5 each year in swimming pools, and an estimated 2,300 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for pool submersion injuries in 2004 – mostly in residential pools.

CPSC recommends layers of protection including barriers, such as a fence with self-closing, self-latching gates completely surrounding your pool to prevent access. If the house forms a side of the barrier, use alarms on doors leading to the pool area or a power safety cover. Additional layers to consider include pool alarms and manual safety covers.

It is important to always be prepared in case of an emergency by having rescue equipment and a phone near the pool, and learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

A common scenario is that young children leave the house without a parent or caregiver realizing it. If a child is missing, look in the pool first.

"Close supervision of young children is crucial in preventing drowning deaths," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "Since no one layer of protection is foolproof, parents must be constantly vigilant to protect their children."

CPSC also is reminding parents and caregivers to be aware of the hidden danger of drain entrapments. Since 1990, CPSC has reports of 130 people who became entrapped on pool and spa drains or whose hair became entangled in the drain cover, resulting in 27 deaths.

The suction from a pool drain can be so powerful that it can hold an adult under water, but most entrapment incidents involve children. A video sequence demonstrates an adult trying to remove a ball entrapped on a pool drain ([standard version](#) or a [higher quality version](#) - broadband connection recommended) ([transcript](#)). This is in "[streaming video](#)" format. CPSC recommends that before you use your pool or spa this year, have a professional inspect it for entrapment hazards.

This inspection should check to make sure appropriate drain covers are in place, and that missing or broken drain covers are replaced, as they are a major reason many entrapment incidents occur.

Pool and spa owners can consider installing a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS), which detects when a drain is blocked and automatically shuts off the pool pump or interrupts the water circulation to prevent an entrapment.

CPSC recently updated its [Guidelines for Entrapment Hazards: Making Pools and Spas Safer \(PDF\)](#), which details specific information for pool owners and professionals to reduce entrapment dangers.

CPSC has a new [Swimming Pool Safety Alert \(PDF\)](#) that provides additional swimming pool and entrapment safety information.

Additionally, CPSC offers more publications consumers can use to help prevent child drowning: [Safety Barrier Guidelines for Pools \(PDF\)](#) and [How to Plan for the Unexpected \(PDF\)](#). Copies of all these free publications can be obtained by going to CPSC's Web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/chdrown.html>, by calling CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772, or by writing to "Pool Safety," U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C., 20207.