



Water Safety

Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide (7% of all injury related deaths). In 2019, South Carolina was tied as the state with the 9th highest rate for fatal unintentional drownings in the US. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among South Carolina children ages 1 to 4. Among children 5 and under, 84% of drownings occur at home. Among children 5-14, 45% of fatalities happen at a public pool. We can help lower these statistics by educating ourselves and our children on water safety.

As a foster parent, you are responsible for ensuring the safety of your foster children when in and around water. The SCDSS Foster Care Licensing policy states the following:

Foster parents must be able to secure/supervise access to in-ground or above-ground **swimming pools** over which the foster family has a right of control and shall maintain adequate supervision during periods of swimming. Swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas must meet the following to ensure they are safe and hazard free (and additionally must meet all state, tribal and/or local safety requirements):

- a. Swimming pools must have a barrier on all sides.
- b. Swimming pools must have their methods of access through the barrier equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock.
- c. Swimming pools must be equipped with a life saving device, such as a ring buoy.
- d. If the swimming pool cannot be emptied after each use, the pool must have a working pump and filtering system.
- e. Hot tubs and spas must have safety covers that are locked when not in use.



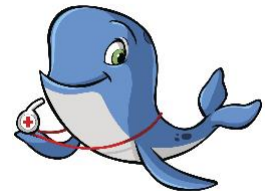


The best way to prevent water accidents is to:

- Provide constant, capable, undistracted adult touch supervision of children in and around all bodies of water
- Enroll children in swimming lessons and see that they maintain their water skills year-round
- Always designate a “water watcher” who is able to swim and who will remain vigilant
- Learn how to swim
- Teach children water safety rules
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or armbands
- Make sure babysitters know CPR and your pool safety rules
- Learn to perform CPR
- Ensure proper barriers, covers and alarms are installed on your pool

If you or your foster children plan to spend any time around water, please take the time to check out the below websites and participate in a free Water Safety Training.

- ❖ Check out the [American Red Cross Website](#) for helpful water safety tips and free Water Safety Training.
- ❖ Check out the [SFPA Website](#) to sign up for the free Water Safety Webinar.
- ❖ Check out the [SAFE KIDS](#) for additional water safety tips and information.



New Foster Home and Adoptive Home Regulations will go into effect on September 12, 2021. You can review the new regulations in the May 28, 2021 edition of the State Register, beginning on page 534, and found at South Carolina Legislature online https://www.scstatehouse.gov/state_register.php