

Every year, thousands of Americans are injured or killed in boating and swimming accidents. You can protect yourself and your family from such accidents by following these guidelines.

## **Home-pool safety**

Half of swimming-pool drownings occur at home or apartment pools. Here's how to keep your family safe:

- Enclose your pool with a fence, wall or other barrier at least 4 feet tall. Install self-latching gates that open outward.
- Don't assume your child can swim; 25 percent of U.S. children who drown have taken swimming lessons. Many youngsters forget how to swim when panicked.
- Keep a portable phone in the pool area and program emergency speed dials on its speed dial.
- Keep a close eye on children and non-swimmers who are using inflatable toys, inner tubes and mattresses. They could slide off them and drown.
- Closely supervise children when they're diving or jumping in the pool. Head and back injuries are likely to occur during these activities.
- Keep the pool's deck area clear of tripping hazards, such as toys, dishes, hoses and the like.
- Review safety measures and rules with guests before they swim.

## **Safety musts for children**

- Never leave a young child alone in a bathtub, wading pool, swimming pool, lake or river. If you must answer the phone or get a towel, take the child with you.
- Be aware of backyard pools in your neighborhood or apartment building; your child could wander off and fall in.
- Enroll children older than 4 in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But remember, the lessons won't make children "drown-proof."
- Teach your older children that they risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate water depth.

For local information please contact the [Lansing Area Safety Council](#) (517) 394-4614 or [www.safetycouncil.org](http://www.safetycouncil.org) . You can also visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org) for more information about swimming and boating safety tips.

*---Furnished by Ingham County Great Start (www.inghamgreatstart.org)*