

# The Facts

## Florida leads the country in drowning deaths of children ages 1–4.

- Drowning is silent and only takes a minute.
- The monetary cost of drowning in Florida for a year is greater than \$15 million.
- Florida's Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act (Chapter 515, Florida Statutes) requires only one physical barrier for pools built after 2000.
- Over 90% of Florida's home swimming pools were built before the law.

The Florida Department of Health strongly recommends multiple barriers to help ensure safety and using layers of protection to help prevent drowning.

Water Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

# DROWNINGS ARE PREVENTABLE

## Injury Prevention Program

The Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Injury Prevention provides statewide coordination and expansion of injury prevention activities (data collection, surveillance, education, and the promotion of interventions) through and with communities, county health departments, and other state agencies.



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[FloridaHealth.gov/WaterSmart](http://FloridaHealth.gov/WaterSmart)



**WaterSmartFL** is a drowning prevention awareness campaign developed by the Florida Department of Health. The statewide initiative promotes the importance of keeping children safe when at or near the pool by incorporating layers of protection: supervision, barriers, and emergency preparedness.

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# Layers of Protection

## Supervise

The most crucial layer of protection, means someone is always actively watching when a child is in the pool.

## Barriers & Alarms

A child should never be able to enter the pool area unaccompanied by a guardian. Barriers physically block a child from the pool.

Barriers include: child-proof locks on all doors, a pool fence with self-latching and self-closing gates, and door and pool alarms.

Pool covers may also be used but make sure it is a professional cover, fitted for your pool. A simple canvas covering can be a drowning hazard and entrap a child in the water.

## Swim Safety

The moment a child stops breathing there is a small, precious window of time in which resuscitation may occur. But only if someone knows what to do.

Even if you're not a parent, it's important to learn CPR. The techniques are easy to learn and can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, it is critical to have a phone nearby and immediately call 911.

# Florida Requirements

Florida's Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act requires one of the following pool safety measures for pools built after October 1, 2000:

1. A pool fence with self-closing, self-latching gate—enclosing the pool and providing no direct access to it.
2. An approved pool cover.
3. Alarms on all doors and windows leading out to the pool.
4. All doors providing direct access from the home to pool to have a self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism no lower than 54 inches above the floor.

The Florida Department of Health recommends, at a minimum, using a combination of the barriers described above to help ensure your pool is equipped with approved safety features.

**Does your pool have the necessary barriers to save a child's life?**



# Physical Barriers

Physical barriers serve as a crucial layer of protection. The Department of Health recommends incorporating a number of different barriers to ensure safety. Additional recommended physical barriers can be viewed at [FloridaHealth.gov/WaterSmart](http://FloridaHealth.gov/WaterSmart).

*The prices below are for estimation purposes only and can vary substantially.*

## Pool Safety Fences

Fences should completely encircle the pool blocking entrance from the house or yard. The fence should be at least 4 feet high and have no holes or gaps that could allow a child to pass through.

*Cost: \$1,000 and up*

## Self-Closing & Self-Latching Gates

The gate should be self-closing, self-latching and open out from the pool. So even if the gate is not latched properly, a child leaning against it will force the gate to lock.

*Cost: \$500–\$1,000*

## Door/Window Alarms

Know the second your child goes outside. All doors and windows providing direct access from the home to the pool must have an alarm.

*Cost: \$0–\$49*

## Doors

All doors providing direct access from the home to the pool should have a self-closing, self-latching device, with a release mechanism that is no lower than 54 inches above the floor.

*Cost: \$50–\$250*