



**APSP**

*The Association of  
Pool & Spa Professionals™*



## The Sensible Way to Enjoy Your Aboveground/Onground Swimming Pool



The safety information  
in this booklet has  
been reviewed by the  
U.S. Consumer Product  
Safety Commission.

*An Essential Safety Guide—Mandatory Reading*

## Preface

This booklet has been prepared by The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals to inform you about general safe use, operation, and maintenance of your pool.

It represents the current knowledge of the industry but is not intended to cover all aspects of pool design, operations, installation, and maintenance. Refer to specific manufacturer's instructions for more details on product installation, use, maintenance, and safety. Keep them, along with this booklet, for ready use and reference. Be sure to pass them along to future owners or renters.

**“Aboveground/onground swimming pools are fun—but along with the fun comes responsibility. Be sure that good times are safe times. Establish rules and enforce them. Supervise your pool.”**

## The Sensible Way to Enjoy Your Aboveground/Onground Swimming Pool

Congratulations on being an aboveground/onground swimming pool owner! Your pool can give you, your family, and guests many years of fun and relaxation. Sensible use of the product is the key to safety. The pool owner must supervise the pool's safe use, operation, and maintenance.

This booklet contains important safety information you should know about operating and maintaining your pool. It will help you understand some of the causes of pool-related accidents and how to prevent them. It is your responsibility to be sure that your family and guests use the pool sensibly and safely.

In addition to this booklet, it is important to read and keep all of the operating instructions, owners' manuals, and warranties for your pool and its equipment. Clearly understand and practice the specifics of safe operation and proper maintenance, which this publication provides. Keep this booklet on file for your own reference and pass it along to future owners or renters. The safety information in this booklet should be reviewed with children before using the pool.

It is the pool owner's responsibility to secure the pool against unauthorized, unsupervised, or unintentional entry. Remember, pool misuse can result in serious injury and/or be dangerous to life and health.

**First-time users run the highest risk of injury! Before they enter the pool, inform them of the safety rules.**

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***“By carefully reading this booklet, you may save the life of a child or prevent serious harm to yourself, family members, or friends. It is your responsibility to learn and understand safety principles and rules. To ensure safety, every pool owner must read this booklet and implement these safe practices.”***

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## Good Reasons for Thinking Safety First

Informed users are concerned about safety because serious injuries and even death can result from unsafe use of aboveground pools, pool equipment, and associated products.

### Important! No Diving



**Aboveground/Onground swimming pools are designed for swimming and wading only. They are not designed for diving, jumping, or sliding. Do not use diving boards, slides, trampolines, or any other similar objects or platform on aboveground/onground pools. Diving, jumping, or sliding is prohibited and is extremely dangerous and can result in death or paralysis.**

**In an aboveground/onground pool, diving, jumping, or sliding is prohibited because the pool is not designed for it. Impress upon all swimmers that you will not allow diving, jumping, or sliding in your aboveground/onground pool.**

**SIGNAGE.** All aboveground/onground pools should be labeled with “No Diving” signs supplied by the manu-

facturer and affixed as recommended or applied by the manufacturer. As the pool owner, it is your responsibility to maintain these signs and make sure they are not covered, removed, or obscured by a deck or other obstruction. If the signs become faded or worn, or are removed or damaged in any way that makes them unreadable, it is your responsibility to replace these signs. **Do not allow the use of your pool without visible “No Diving” signs in place.**

**Paralysis - Do not dive, jump, or slide into your aboveground/onground pool - it is not designed for these activities! Paralysis or death can result. DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!**

Diving, jumping, or sliding into an aboveground pool is prohibited. If you jump into the pool, you could seriously injure your back or neck or hurt others. If you dive or slide into the pool, you could hit your head on the bottom or side, sustaining a spinal cord injury and possibly becoming paralyzed from the neck down for the rest of your life! A number of people who ignored these rules and chose to dive are now paralyzed! The facts show that many of these people were experienced divers! Inform family and guests who come to enjoy your pool of the safety rules you have established. **DON'T DIVE, JUMP, OR SLIDE!** Practice safety. Remember, it is the responsibility of the parent, caretaker, and pool owner to prevent accidents.

# Guidelines for Using Aboveground/Onground Swimming Pools

As a pool owner, you may be legally liable for the safety of all persons who use your pool. Be sure your insurance policy is updated to include ownership of your pool. You are responsible for the safety of all persons who use your pool.

Facing ownership responsibilities does not mean taking the fun out of using your pool. If you apply safety practices and use good judgment, you will find that the benefits of a pool can far outweigh the risks. Here are some guidelines for using your aboveground/onground swimming pool.

## Supervision

**LAYERS OF PROTECTION – Never leave the pool unsupervised. When supervision is not available, even for a moment, close the pool.**

Supervision is the primary layer of protection and the key to reducing the number of submersion incidents. Appoint one responsible adult as a “designated child watcher.” **One individual must assume primary responsibility for constant visual supervision of the pool.** The supervisor must study the contents of this booklet as well as any instructions from the pool manufacturer and be thoroughly familiar with all facets of the safe operation and maintenance of the pool. He or she will take responsibility for com-

municating safety information to all persons who enter the pool. Supervision should be continuous when the pool is in use. **The supervisor or “designated child watcher” is responsible for enforcing “house rules” for your pool.** Never leave children with caretakers or supervisors unless they are capable and responsible in the pool environment.

It is a good idea to designate a back-up for times when the primary supervisor is unavailable. (When one supervisor is called away, i.e., to answer the door bell, another supervisor must be appointed immediately.)

If you must leave the pool area, even for one minute, take your child with you. One lapse in supervision can spell tragedy. Do not allow anyone of any age to swim without a “designated watcher” nearby. Examples of good safety behavior by adults are important to educating and safeguarding children.

When the pool is not in use, the pool owner is responsible for safeguarding the pool.

Draw up these rules from information in this booklet and other safety and maintenance information provided by the manufacturer or dealer. These rules should cover such things as the proper use of pool games, consumption of food, alcoholic beverages, maintenance,

use of electrical appliances, and the handling of chemicals. Establish rules immediately. Write them in simple language and post them near the pool where they are easy to see. These rules should be clearly communicated to and understood by all persons, young and old, who use your pool. **Most importantly, consistently enforce these rules.**

**BARRIERS** – The ANSI/IAF-8 2005 *Model Barrier Code for Residential Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs* establishes layers of protection to complement the requirement for constant adult supervision of young children around aquatic environments.

At times, children may do the unexpected, catching their supervisors off guard. Additional layers of protection such as a fence, wall, or natural barrier of sufficient height are used to keep unauthorized and unsupervised people out of your pool.

Pools are attractive to children, and children must be kept away from them in the absence of adult supervision. Remember, these layers of protection will only delay and may not prevent a toddler from entering the pool area. Supervision is the only way to prevent an accident.

Gates and doors, including sliding glass patio doors, should be self-closing and self-latching to prevent unauthorized and unsupervised entry and use to the pool area by children. Alarms similar to burglar alarms may be placed on the doors to alert caretakers of unauthorized

entry to the pool area. (The inside latch should be above the reach of toddlers or young children.)

All fences can be climbed by children, given sufficient time. Do not assume that your pool is safe from entry because you have a fence. A fence may lull you into a false sense of security. **Only adult supervision can prevent drowning accidents.** All layers of protection must be kept in good working order at all times.

Check with your state and local governments to learn their specific requirements concerning barriers and other layers of protection around pools. If specific requirements do not exist, contact APSP for the ANSI/IAF-8 2005 *Model Barrier Code for Residential Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs* and the APSP brochure entitled “Layers of Protection.”

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***“Layers of protection such as a fence, wall, or natural barrier around your pool can help keep out children under the age of five and all other unauthorized users. Make sure that your fence has a self-closing and self-latching gate and is properly maintained. Remember there is no substitute for adult supervision.”***

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## Swimming Ability

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If you are unsure of someone's swimming abilities, make sure they stay in the shallow water area and watch them closely. If you wish to teach non-swimmers or poor swimmers, the shallow area of the pool is an excellent place for instruction. Never swim alone or allow others to do so. Never allow anyone to swim when overtired, feeling chilled, or after taking drugs or drinking alcohol.

Describe or demonstrate to everyone the underwater shape and depth of the pool. You should be aware that visual inspection of the pool may be misleading due to a variety of factors.

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***“A telephone near the pool area will provide quicker access to a medical facility in case of an emergency.”***

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**Teach Your Children to Swim!** Three to five years of age is the best time for swimming lessons. Do not be lulled into a false sense of security because your child knows how to swim — adult supervision is still required. Never consider children water-safe despite their swimming skills, previous instruction, or experience. Many professionals warn that these lessons may provide a false sense of security to a child's family and not actually prepare a child for surviving a true emergency.

It also makes sense for the supervisor and other responsible family members to be trained in artificial respiration and/or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Instruction is available from local community organizations such as the American Red Cross.

## Drowning Prevention and Safety Tips

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**Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death for American infants and children five and under.** According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at least 240 children under 5 years old drown in pools, spas, and hot tubs annually. Most of the cases involve residential pools. Drowning remains the second leading cause of injury-related death among children ages 1 to 14 in all bodies of water nationwide.

Protecting young children from accidental drownings and near-drownings in all aquatic environments, whether natural or constructed, is a primary concern of the aquatic industry, health and safety organizations, and regulatory groups. It is the responsibility of the parent, caretaker, and pool owner to prevent accidents. Drowning prevention information is not for “someone else.” It is for you. Because only by increased awareness and effort can we reduce such tragedies.

Children are naturally attracted to swimming pools and associated pool toys. To prevent drownings and other serious injuries you must keep children away from pools and all bodies of water in the absence of adult supervision.

Organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Drowning Prevention Foundation, Think First, The Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the YMCA of the United States, the National Rehabilitation Hospital, and the National Swimming Pool Foundation recognize that **constant adult supervision** is the primary element in an integrated approach to drowning prevention.

**SAFETY TIPS** – For more information write for the brochures entitled “Children Aren't Waterproof,” “Layers of Protection,” and “Pool and Spa Emergency Procedures for Infants and Children” from The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals, 2111 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703-838-0083 Ext. 301 or visit the APSP website; [www.APSP.org](http://www.APSP.org); Consumer Information section.

- Remove vegetation and other obstacles to ensure a clear view of the pool. Maintain a clear zone around the perimeter of the pool.
- Do not place objects (e.g., chairs, tables, or equipment) near the pool barrier because a child or youngster could climb them to gain access to the pool.

- A fence, wall, or natural barrier must be of sufficient height to keep unauthorized people out of your pool. Doors and access gates, if used, should have a self-latching or self-closing mechanism above the reach of toddlers to protect against unauthorized entry and use.
- Limit access to the pool by locking doors or gates whenever swimming is not supervised.
- Be especially alert for potential drowning accidents if you use any lightweight, floating pool covers (i.e., solar or insulating covers). No one should walk or crawl on them. The pool should never be used when these covers are in use because someone may become entrapped.
- Floating toys attract youngsters. Remove toys from the pool when not in use. Your child can easily fall into the pool while trying to retrieve one. Keep toys, particularly baby walkers, tricycles, or wheel toys away from the pool. A child playing with these could accidentally fall into the water.
- Do not rely on plastic inner tubes, inflatable arm bands, water wings, or other flotation devices to prevent accidents. Do not permit playful screaming for help (false alarms) that might mask a real emergency.
- Always seek the advice of a pool and spa professional when creating a safety checklist and ask to see their credentials to ensure that those who

maintain your aboveground/on-ground pool are trained to maximize the “Layers of Protection.” Remember, safety is ultimately your responsibility as the pool owner.

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## Exercise and Fitness

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Your aboveground/onground swimming pool provides a place for convenient, effective exercise. It can be used for both serious lap swimming and for performing calisthenics and other exercises. Before beginning any exercise program, consult your physician.

**Lap swimming is perhaps the best form of aerobic conditioning – you can efficiently exercise your heart without placing stress on your weight-bearing joints and the lumbar spine.** According to Dr. Jane Katz, author of *Swimming for Total Fitness*, moving the arms and legs against the resistance of water is similar to exercising with weights, but since water doesn’t allow any sudden, harmful movements and your body is buoyant, the risk of injury is lowered.

Exercises for flexibility, aerobics, and strength are easier in water than on land, because being in water effectively lessens the pull of gravity on your body. It is easier (particularly for older people or those with painful joints or weak leg muscles) to do calisthenics in water. Learn more about these kinds of water exercises from a booklet called “The New Aqua Dynamics: Water Exercises to

Fit Any Body,” which is available for \$5.00 from The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals, 2111 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703-838-0083 Ext. 301.

Your pool is an excellent place to exercise. But use good judgment in monitoring your own exercise and in supervising others who exercise in your pool.

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## Entertaining

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*“Alcohol or drugs do not mix with pool activities.”*

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Your pool can be the focal point for happy entertaining. **Plan ahead to prevent accidents and injuries and to make your entertaining truly enjoyable.**

- Never leave the pool unsupervised. The supervisor or “designated child watcher” is responsible for constant visual supervision of the pool.
- Whether having a party or just having a few people over for a swim, think about the number of invited guests and their swimming skills. Plan ahead. Children require more of your attention.

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*“Entertaining can be both fun and safe with a little planning and good judgment. Use only unbreakable dishes, beverage containers and utensils. And never allow anyone to use the pool under the influence of alcohol or drugs.”*

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- Food and drink play an important part in entertaining. Establish an area away from the pool for refreshments. This will prevent debris from falling into the pool and prevent accidental falls caused by spilled food or drink.
- Your guests probably will be barefooted while near the pool. Use only unbreakable dishes, beverage containers, and utensils. Never use glass anywhere near the pool. Broken glass is invisible in water and extremely difficult to get out of the support system.
- Keep electrical appliances a significant distance from the pool. Don’t use extension cords. **Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) on any appliance or electrical device that is used poolside.** Where possible, use battery-operated appliances around the pool. Electrocutation from appliances and telephones in contact with water is a real danger.
- Insist that poor swimmers or non-swimmers stay in water depths that are not over their heads. Do not assume that everyone near or in the water can swim well or will know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Wherever practical, anyone who uses your pool should shower with soap and water before use. Showering before use washes away many of the common skin bacteria and removes lotions, deodorants, creams, etc. Perspiration and lotions will reduce the effectiveness of the pool disinfectant and lessen the ability of the filter to work efficiently.
- People with skin, ear, genital, or other body infections, open sores or wounds, etc. should not use the pool because of the possibility of spreading infection.
- If you use your pool at night, provide adequate lighting in and around the pool so that the pool bottom is clearly visible.
- **The use of alcohol or drugs does not mix with pool activities.** These substances act as depressants. They can “slow you down” because they affect the part of the brain that exercises restraint and control. Alcohol can instill false courage or “bravado,” leading people to try things they normally would not, such as horseplay or diving in aboveground/onground swimming pools. Therefore, persons who have been drinking

alcohol should not be allowed in the pool and should be carefully supervised in the area surrounding the pool.

- Prescription medicines sometimes cause drowsiness or have other side effects. If you are taking prescription medicine, check with your doctor before using the pool.
- Using inflatable toys, rafts, and floats in your pool can be fun. Remember that they are also deflatable. Poor swimmers or non-swimmers should use them only in shallow water.
- **Games that may appear safe sometimes are not. Encourage and supervise the use of good pool games and toys.**
- Always obey and enforce safety rules. Insist that there be no running, pushing, or roughhousing near the pool. Never throw anyone into the pool.
- Prohibit activities such as diving through an inner tube. Serious head or neck injuries can occur regardless of water depth, due to hitting the head on the inner tube and/or the bottom or side of the pool.
- Help guests who have removed eyeglasses or contact lenses for swimming. Be aware that their depth perception and ability to judge distance are changed. Children especially may be unaware of the difference.

- Do not allow running on the pool deck, as injuries may occur from slips and falls.
- Stay out of your pool during lightning or rainstorms because there is a possibility of electrocution from the lightning hitting the water.
- **You have the bottom line responsibility in poolside entertaining. Use good judgment to help protect yourself, your family, and guests.** If in doubt, prohibit use of the pool by persons whose condition or ability you doubt. Remember, you are in charge of your pool.

### **One More Word on Drinking**

Many people believe they have to drink a lot to be affected by alcohol. Studies show this just isn't true. **The alcohol in just one or two beverages can affect your judgment, even though you don't feel or appear to be "drunk."**

A small amount of alcohol can slow your reflexes. This is especially true if you are tired or on medication — such as cold or allergy remedies or prescription drugs. Plan your events so swimming comes before the drinking. Studies have shown that alcohol is directly related to 50-80% of diving accidents. The effects of alcohol are a major contributor to all other types of pool accidents.

**Supervise your pool activities!**

## **Overall Safe Operation and Maintenance of Your Aboveground/Onground Pool**

Keeping your pool in top operating form is very important to help ensure the safety of those who use it, and to protect your investment. **Carefully read, understand, and follow the operating and maintenance instructions supplied by the pool manufacturer and the manufacturers of associated products (e.g., filters, pumps, chemicals).** This booklet is not intended to replace information supplied by manufacturers. A good general rule is to visually inspect your pool area and equipment regularly. If anything looks broken, worn, corroded, frayed, or not right, contact your pool professional for advice and repairs. A simple repair or replacement may prevent an injury or save a life. It may also prevent more serious or expensive equipment problems.

### **Equipment In and Around the Pool**

- A variety of accessories are available to complement your pool. Be aware of all precautions related to the installation, use, and maintenance of these products. It makes sense to pay special attention to educating children about safety precautions. Teach your children about equipment maintenance and proper upkeep of the pool. As they get older, your children will learn from your example that they must respect the pool and surrounding area and act responsibly.

- Pool slides and diving boards require a greater water depth than is available in an aboveground pool. Therefore, they must not be used with aboveground pools.
- Trampolines must never be used with aboveground pools.
- A deck around your pool can add real beauty and enjoyment. Be sure your deck has a slip-resisting surface with adequate drainage. Overall, slips and falls constitute the greatest number of accidents involving pools. Keep the deck or patio clean and clear of all debris. Check periodically for signs of wear and tear, which may make these surfaces hazardous. Remember, diving, jumping, or sliding into an aboveground/onground pool is prohibited even if you have an attached deck!

- **Rope and Float Lines.** If your pool is furnished with a rope and float line, refer to the manufacturer's instructions for installation and use.
- **Pool Covers.** Pool covers are a real benefit to you in terms of saving energy and keeping debris out of the pool. For safe installation, use, and maintenance of these covers, carefully read and follow the directions of the manufacturer. These are not safety covers. They do not prevent drowning or entry into the pool. For more information see "Drowning Prevention Tips."

- Avoid the possibility of someone being trapped under the pool cover by always completely removing the cover before use. Never swim under the cover. Drain any standing water from the surface of your pool cover (e.g., by using a water pump). Even a small amount of water may be sufficient for a small child to drown on top of the cover.

- **Safety Covers.** If you use a pool cover as a safety cover, it must comply with ASTM F 1346-96 *Standard Performance Specification for Safety Covers and Labeling Requirements for All Covers for Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs*. Carefully read the manufacturer’s instructions for safe use.

## Ladders, Steps, & Handrails

**Never allow anyone to swim between the ladder and the pool wall or through the risers.**

**Only use an aboveground/onground pool ladder or staircase to enter or exit your pool.**

- Ladders may be slippery when wet. Use caution!
- It is the pool owner’s responsibility to secure the pool against unauthorized, unsupervised, or unintentional entry.
- Prevent unauthorized or unsupervised use of your pool, particularly by children and toddlers. **Remember**

**to secure, lock, or remove the ladder to prevent access when the pool is not to be used.**

- Follow manufacturer’s instructions for installation and safety.
- Face the ladder when going up or down. Instruct pool users about proper use of pool ladders and stairs.
- Never allow anyone to swim between the ladder and the pool wall or through the risers. They can become entrapped and may drown. APSP’s voluntary standard, ANSI/APSP-4 2007, requires A-frame ladders to have a physical barrier to prevent entrapment between the ladder and pool wall as well as between the risers.
- **Taylor’s Rule: Never swim between the wall and the ladder or through the ladder risers. Death by drowning may result. \***
- Allow only one person at a time on the ladder. Never allow anyone to dive or jump from ladders, steps, or from the ladder platform.
- Check all nuts and bolts regularly to make sure the ladder stays sturdy and safe.
- Permanently installed ladders, handrails, and swimming pool steps must be securely mounted. Routinely inspect them to ensure that they are firmly in place. Check for broken treads, sharp edges, and loose bolts and nuts. Keep handrails, steps, and ladders

unobstructed for use. Don’t use them for hanging towels or goggles, tying up rubber rafts, and the like.

*\*Eleven year-old Taylor Velargo drowned on June 11, 2000, when he became entrapped while attempting to swim through the risers of an aboveground pool ladder.*

## Suction Outlets (Drains)

- Never enter the pool if a suction fitting or suction outlet cover (drain cover) is loose, cracked, broken, or missing. Immediately notify the pool owner or operator if you find the outlet (drain) cover loose, broken, or missing.
- Never play or swim near suction fittings. Your body or hair may be trapped causing permanent injury or drowning. Tell children, particularly, that these devices are not toys. Instruct all swimmers not to stick their fingers, toes, or body into them.
- Your pool’s inlet and outlet fittings, grates, skimmer, and suction outlet (main drain) covers should be kept in good condition and in place at all times and should be secured in such a manner that they can’t be removed without the use of tools.
- Your aboveground pool’s suction outlet fittings and suction outlet covers must comply with the latest edition of ASME/ANSI A112.19.8. If the suction outlet cover is in

## WARNING DROWNING HAZARD



**Avoid Evisceration**



**Avoid Drain Covers**



**Avoid Body Entrapment**



**Avoid Finger Entrapment**



**Avoid Hair Entanglement**



compliance there will be a designation marker on the cover/fitting. If the drain cover does not comply, shut down the pool until the drain cover is replaced. Consult a pool professional.

- Anyone with long hair should be cautioned not to get their hair near a pool outlet. Hair entrapment is the leading cause of entrapment. The suction can cause hair or body entrapment and drowning. Never allow a child to play in a way that could permit the child's hair to come near the drain cover. If you have long hair, pin it up or wear a bathing cap.
- **ENTRAPMENT** – Older, missing, or broken outlet (drain) covers or grates and other suction fittings can entrap hair or body parts and result in drowning. To prevent injury, be sure your pool is equipped with an anti-entrapment fitting that is marked in accordance with ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 standard. If you need assistance to determine this, please consult a pool professional.
- For further consumer awareness information, visit the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at: [www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/363.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/363.pdf) and The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals at <http://www.APSP.org>.

## Filter Systems

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- Filtration equipment requires care in handling as well as regular maintenance and replacement of parts to function properly and efficiently.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintaining, servicing, or repairing a filter or separation tank. Regularly inspect this equipment while it is turned off, and always replace worn or damaged parts.
- Most filter systems can maintain internal pressure even when shut off. Never inspect or perform work on your filter equipment without turning the system off and bleeding off the internal pressure through the manual valve provided for that purpose. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When you restart your filter after maintenance, or when you are turning on your equipment to put your pool in operation, always bleed off the air in your filter tank and then stand back. Serious bodily injury can occur if the top of the filter separates from the bottom with sudden force because of some problem or error on your part.
- Always securely clamp the top and bottom of a two-piece filter in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Serious bodily injury or death can result if the top of a two-piece filter is blown off by air pressure in the tank. **If you are at all unsure of how to proceed, ask your pool professional.**

## Heaters

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- Heaters produce carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas. Do not place heaters under or near windows. Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Heaters should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and should be in accordance with state or local government regulations or fire codes. Heaters may be hot to the touch. Do not place or drape any flammable material (e.g., a towel or tee shirt) on top of or near a heater.
- If you wish to use a propane heater, consult local regulations for the safe use, hook-up, and storage of propane products. These regulations may be under the control of local fire or municipal departments, county building codes, etc. Learn your local regulations and follow them.
- **With propane or natural gas heaters, when lighting or relighting the pilot or turning the heater on or off, refer to the manufacturer's instructions on the name and rating plate.** This plate is attached to the heater inside the control compartment. Following these instructions will prevent injuries. Gas is explosive and flammable.

## Adequate Lighting

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If the pool is used after dusk, adequate lighting must be provided. Illumination must be sufficient to allow swimmers to clearly judge pool depth as well as all features in and around the pool. For recommendations, consult your local licensed electrical contractor.

## First Aid

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Preventing an emergency is the best preparation: Never leave a child alone in or near a pool or any other body of water.

### **CUTS, CONTUSIONS, AND ABRASIONS.**

The pool environment, as well as associated products and equipment, can be a source of injury to users. Slipping and falling can result in cuts or scrapes or broken legs and arms. Horseplay, improper use of equipment, or failure to follow manufacturers' instructions or warnings can result in serious trauma and permanently disabling injuries.

### **ELECTRICAL SHOCK/ELECTROCUTION.**

Water is an excellent conductor of electricity. Electrical shock or electrocution can occur in a pool if live electrical current flowing through appliances and devices (including current from a telephone) comes into contact with the water. Make sure all electrical appliances and devices are protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter or GFCI.

Have a complete first aid kit at poolside, and make sure that someone knows how to use the contents properly. Post a list of emergency telephone numbers by the phone nearest the pool with the names and telephone numbers of the closest physician, ambulance service, hospital, and police, fire, or rescue unit. It is a good idea to include your home address on this list. In an emergency, it's not uncommon for someone to panic and "forget" his own address.

Adults in the family should be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). CPR is the combination of rescue breathing and artificial circulation for victims of respiratory or cardiac arrest as a result of drowning, heart attack, or other causes. CPR training is available through the local chapters of the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association.

## In Case of Emergency

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1. Dial the local emergency telephone numbers (911, or the appropriate number for Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Fire, or Police). It is advisable to install a telephone (or use a cordless telephone) in the pool area.
2. Give your:
  - A. Name,
  - B. Location, and
  - C. Telephone number you are calling from.
3. Tell what happened and how many people need help.
4. Don't hang up the phone until after the emergency person does.

## Lifesaving Equipment

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Plan ahead for potential emergency situations by owning and being familiar with basic lifesaving equipment and procedures. Have at poolside a device such as a solid pole or a rope that can provide immediate assistance to a person in trouble. Make sure that any flotation rescue equipment used is Coast Guard approved, for example, a type III life-vest or ring buoy. Practice using these devices correctly to be ready in an emergency. Use these devices only for emergencies. Do not allow children to play with lifesaving equipment.

Lifesaving equipment should be stored in a location that is visible and readily available to users of the pool. If proper equipment is not available in an emergency situation, throw something floatable (e.g., styrofoam toys or boards, etc.) into the pool for the person to grab onto until help arrives, or until he or she gets to the side of the pool.

## Pool Water Chemistry

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The chemicals needed for your pool help make it clean, safe, and more attractive to use. But remember that these chemicals are potentially dangerous and may present some hazards if not used properly. Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions for the use and storage of chemicals.

- **Use an EPA-registered sanitizer and follow the use directions on the label to protect against the spread of infection. Do not assume that because the water is clear it has been properly sanitized. Periodically check the sanitizer levels to ensure they are maintained according to the label directions.**
- Keep the pool clean and clear of debris. For safety's sake, swimmers and supervisors must be able to clearly see the bottom drain or bottom of the pool, so as to be able to make intelligent decisions about pool use.
- Keep the pool filled to its proper level. Periodically check the water levels.
- When opening your pool each year, have the water professionally tested to ensure safe water quality and replace the test kit reagents.
- Never add chemicals to the pool water while swimmers are using the pool.

- **Always read and follow label instructions.** Always add chemicals either directly to the water, or if it is necessary to pre-dissolve the chemical, put the water in the pail first, then add the chemical. If the directions call for predissolving a dry chemical in a pail of water, be sure to only add chemical from a single package. Do not add chemicals from different packages. Adding chemicals from different packages can result in the mixing of incompatible chemicals, which can lead to fire, explosion, or release of toxic gases.
- Never mix two chemicals together. Use a clean dry scoop for each chemical. Never combine material from "old" and "new" containers. Do not return a wet scoop to the chemical container.
- When preparing water solutions for feeder application (e.g., disinfectant or soda ash), pour the chemical slowly into the appropriate amount of water, stirring constantly to provide mixing and dilutions. Do not stir with your hands—use a clean, dry, non-metallic utensil.
- Carefully clean up any spilled chemicals according to the label directions. Check with local authorities before sending any chemicals to the sewer as waste. Do not put spilled material back in the original container.

- To eliminate risk of fire, explosion, or poisoning, rinse empty disinfectant containers thoroughly with water before disposing of them.
- Test the water in your pool with a reliable test kit on a schedule specified by the sanitizer label or as recommended by your pool professional. As a rule, the more people who use your pool, the more frequently you should test the water. Add the necessary chemicals according to the test results and the manufacturer's instructions.
- Chemicals for test kits should be replaced each year.
- Do not inhale dust or fumes from any pool chemicals. If necessary, use protective devices for breathing, handling, and eye protection. Promptly wash off any residues that get on your skin.
- Never reuse old chemical containers.
- If you have any questions regarding safe handling, storage, or use of pool chemicals, contact the manufacturers.

#### **STORAGE:**

- NEVER consolidate chemicals from separate partial containers into a single container because this practice can lead to mixing of incompatible chemicals (e.g., different types of chlorinating agents). Fire, explosion, release of toxic gases, injury, and property damage can result from mixing incompatible chemicals.
- Before using chemicals, read the labels and directions carefully. Follow label instructions for use, storage, spill, and disposal of pool chemicals.
- Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children. Do not allow children to handle pool and spa chemicals.
- Burns/Fires — Chemicals needed for clean, sanitized water are potentially harmful when improperly stored or used. If mixed with other chemicals or elements, explosions and fire can occur. Read the label and follow manufacturers' instructions!
- Keep the original lids on all chemical containers and make sure the lids are closed tightly when not in use.
- Do not stack different chemicals on top of one another.

- Store your pool chemicals in a clean, cool, dry, well-ventilated area preferably off the floor, to prevent contamination from other materials. Especially, do not store chemicals near the pool heater. Keep them away from chemicals and equipment used for garden and lawn maintenance. Keep acids away from other chemicals.

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***“Don't guess with chemicals. Before using, read the labels and follow directions carefully. Be sure to store them properly.”***

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- Keep liquid chemicals away from dry chemicals. Keep apart chemicals that are different forms of oxidizing compounds. Physically separate all different forms of chemicals.
- Do not store your pool chemicals where other flammable items may mix with them. For example, a mixture of pool chemicals and fertilizer can cause a fire or explosion.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using chemicals.

## **Electrical Maintenance**

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Here are some general safety rules and precautions for electrical maintenance:

- Before working with any electrical equipment, make sure the electricity is turned off at the circuit breaker or fuse box.
- **Make sure that the electrical outlets near the pool are protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's).** GFCI's are designed to prevent electrical shock. They are a kind of “fail safe” device that can shut off electrical current in fractions of seconds. Ask a licensed electrician for more details.
- If you have any frayed cords, loose connections, sparking, or arcing, turn off the power at the circuit breaker and call for a licensed electrician.
- Have a licensed electrician inspect and test all equipment prior to initial operation and before each season.
- Never replace bulbs for underwater lights yourself. Get an expert to do this for you.

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***“Working with electricity is a job best left to the experts. Don't take chances.”***

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- Do not let water accumulate on floor or deck areas where electrical switches are located.
- Do not stand in water while operating electrical components.
- To safely use electricity in and around your pool, you must have equipment expressly designed for this purpose. **Consult with a licensed electrician for help in equipping your pool side area correctly for electricity.** Ask the licensed electrician to be aware of any local electrical codes that apply in your area. Ensure that your pool and its equipment are designed and installed to conform to the National Electrical Code for pools and related equipment. Electrical work is not for do-it-yourselfers or other amateurs. Contract with a licensed electrician to make sure that all of your outside electrical lines (not just those for the pool, its equipment, and accessories, but also other appliances used outside as well) are protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's). GFCI's are designed to protect against the hazards of electrical shock.
- If you are installing your own pool, it is your responsibility to make certain that all work performed complies with the National Electrical Code and all other applicable codes and regulations.

## Recommended Use of Professionals

**For your protection, only pool professionals, licensed electricians, builders, carpenters, or other appropriate experts should perform the following services:**

- Selection, installation, and servicing of electrical equipment, heaters, filters.
- Inspection and replacement of vinyl liners.
- Building of walls, fences, and other barriers as layers of protection.
- Annual inspection of all pool equipment and accessories.
- Replacement and repair of electrical wires and pool light apparatus.

## Notice to Parents and Pool Owners

Parents and pool owners: The lives and health of you, your family, and your friends and neighbors are important. Please practice safety and supervise your pool. Review the safety information in this booklet with your children and any children that use the pool. It is your responsibility to enforce the rules of safety.

A good exercise would be to have each of your children and the other pool users who reside with you read this booklet and sign in one of the spaces indicated below. This will help you enforce the rules since you can always refer back to their promise reflected by their signature.

We the undersigned have read this safety booklet. We understand what it says and we promise to follow the rules of safety and to use our common sense.

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## Where You Can Find More Consumer Awareness Information

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) offers many publications and materials to help you enjoy your pool. They also offer informative materials on spas and inground swimming pools.

### CONTACT:

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals  
 2111 Eisenhower Avenue  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 703.838.0083 / 800.323.3996  
 memberservices@TheAPSP.org  
 www.APSP.org

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**WARNING: There is no substitute for constant, competent adult supervision in the swimming pool environment! Lives depend on you!**

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## The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP)

is the world's largest international trade association representing the swimming pool, spa, hot tub, and recreational water industries with a mission to enhance the business success of members. The member companies of the APSP include manufacturers, distributors, manufacturers' agents, designers, builders, installers, retailers, and service professionals. APSP members adhere to a code of business ethics and share a commitment to public health and safety in the use of pools, spas, and hot tubs. For more information visit **[www.APSP.org](http://www.APSP.org)**.



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