



Aquatic Safety Tips

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the incidence of drowning in the United States has declined from 6,300 people in 1981 to about 4,000 people in 1998. This reduction can be directly traced to increased training of certified lifeguards. This number can be reduced even further with continued training and education of each lifeguard.

1. Lifeguards must be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and have a Red Cross lifeguard certification or equivalent.
2. Each lifeguard should have a life-saving tube, mask, and gloves. The lifeguard must carry this equipment in a fanny pack at all times while on duty. Equipment should not be kept in the office as it will not be accessible in an emergency.
3. All life-saving equipment should be in good condition and mounted in a conspicuous location. Equipment should be routinely inspected and repaired as necessary. Lifeguards must be trained on all safety equipment.
4. Whenever possible, lifeguards should face away from any significant light source.
5. Elevate the guard's position as much as possible. The larger the sight angles into the water, the better the visual penetration into the pool.
6. Each lifeguard should be equipped with a form of communication like a whistle, flag, walkie-talkie, or cell phone.
7. All guests should be evaluated to determine if they are "high risk" swimmers.
8. Posted signs and rules are an important part of an aquatic facility or swimming pool. Signs provide clear direction about expected and prohibited behavior.
9. All pools should have posted rules that are clearly visible and legible. Signs should be written in English, unless demographics dictate otherwise. Pictographs can also be helpful in displaying the prohibited activity.

Swimming-related drownings in areas where lifeguards are on duty usually result from three causes commonly referred to as the "RID" principles. Lifeguards should regularly discuss these areas of concern.

1. Recognition – Failure to recognize a victim is in distress.
2. Intrusion – Performing secondary duties, like sweeping the deck.
3. Distraction – Talking with other staff or patrons.

Flume water slides and drop slides are main attractions at aquatic facilities. Some of the most overlooked hazards are the walkway, stairs, and platform surfaces that lead to the top of the flume tower. These surfaces must be made of non-slip material and continually monitored to minimize the risk of slip and fall injuries. Railings and supports must be inspected to ensure they're in good condition.

Special attention must be provided by the lifeguards. One lifeguard should be stationed at the top platform and one near the plunge pool. A communications system between the two lifeguards is critical. This will help ensure only one rider at a time is in the slide. The lifeguard near the plunge pool has the responsibility for observing that area only and should be ready to help users exit the area.

These safety tips will help ensure everyone will safely enjoy the swimming experience.