

## A child can drown in a matter of seconds.

Unsupervised kids can find ways into pools. If they can swim, they've got a fighting chance.

*Dr Steve Rashford, medical director,  
Queensland Ambulance Service*

### Improve your pool safety

To improve the safety of your pool:

- complete the *How safe is your pool* checklist available at [www.dip.qld.gov.au/poolsafety](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/poolsafety)
- have your pool inspected and certified
- maintain your pool fence and gate latches
- ensure the gate is always closed
- ensure the latch closes automatically
- do not tie back your gate or obstruct the latch from closing automatically
- regularly check your fence for damage and to ensure objects near the fence (such as trees and furniture) do not enable a child to climb over the fence
- teach your children to swim (swimming instruction alone is not a guarantee against drowning)
- supervise children at all times when near swimming pools—many drownings happen in the few seconds that parents are distracted
- display a CPR sign and attend a CPR first aid course.

There are more than 300 000 residential pools in Queensland. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death in children aged under five in Queensland.

Climbable objects, such as outdoor furniture and pot plants, can be used by young children to get into the pool area. These types of objects should be kept well clear of the pool fence, put away when not in use or fixed so that they cannot be used by a small child.

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## A child can drown in a matter of seconds.

Make sure you follow the ABC of pool safety.



It took Hannah less than three minutes to get into the pool. The same time it took to change my son's nappy. She grabbed a chair and opened up the gate.

**I still can't believe my daughter's gone.**

*Katherine Plint*

In 2008–2009 eight children drowned in swimming pools in Queensland. It is estimated that for every young child that drowns in a pool, approximately five are hospitalised due to immersion injuries. Some of these children will suffer permanent brain damage.

There are many factors that contribute to children drowning in residential swimming pools. The Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit has identified some of the major factors:

- inadequate fencing or no fencing
- lack of gate security
- lack of effective water safety skills
- inadequate supervision
- lack of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills.

Recent research indicates drowning in residential swimming pools is the third leading cause of water-related deaths for children under the age of five in Queensland.

In addition, approximately 50 young Queensland children present to emergency departments each year following an immersion accident in a residential swimming pool. Nearly three quarters of those children an immersion event are admitted to hospital and some suffer lifelong brain injuries.

## Follow the ABC of pool safety

The Queensland Government's annual pool safety awareness campaign calls on parents, those supervising children and pool owners to follow the ABC of pool safety:

- A**lways supervise your children near a pool.
- B**egin swimming lessons for your children.
- C**lose the pool gate and keep your fence maintained.

## Always supervise your children near a pool


Effective pool safety depends on parents and carers being vigilant supervising young children around pools at all times.

Young children are particularly vulnerable within the first six months of moving into a property with a swimming pool or when a new swimming pool is installed. Always supervise children, especially during this period, and help young children become accustomed to the new surroundings and the associated dangers.

## Begin swimming lessons for your children

Many parents start swimming lessons out of concern for their child's water safety. Swimming lessons are never a substitute for supervision, but learning how to swim does reduce the possibility of drowning.

The risks posed by drowning don't go away in the cooler parts of the year, so neither should the lessons. The skills and behaviours that are taught in lessons need constant reinforcement throughout the year.



The worst part of my job is telling someone their child has died.

**I never thought it would happen to me.**

The pain of my daughter's loss is with me forever. Don't let a child drown in your swimming pool—ensure the fence complies.

*Sergeant Andrew Plint,  
Queensland Police officer and father*

## Close the pool gate and keep your fence maintained

Eight children drown in Queensland swimming pools every year. Almost all swimming pool drownings are preventable.

In the decade from 1992–2001, 73 children aged under five years drowned in residential swimming pools in Queensland.

- 21 per cent drowned because the pool was not fenced
- 46 per cent drowned because they gained access through the fence/gate (that is, the gate was defective, or the gate was propped open)
- 13 per cent drowned because they gained access through defective house doors (in three-sided fencing permitted for pools approved prior to 1991).

It is important to check your pool fence and ensure it complies. For information on pool fencing laws or enforcement in your neighbourhood, visit the Department of Infrastructure and Planning's website [www.dip.qld.gov.au](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au) or contact your local council.