

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

*An Essential Safety Guide*

*Mandatory Reading*

**Warning:**

There is no substitute for competent adult supervision in the swimming pool environment! Lives depend on you!



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

**National Spa & Pool Institute**

Founded in 1956, the National Spa & Pool Institute (NSPI) has over 5,400 members in more than 75 local chapters. NSPI members share a commitment to fair business practices and to public health and safety in the installation, maintenance and operation of swimming pool and spas. NSPI members agree to abide by a strict code of ethics governing their business. Designed for your protection, this business ethics code is backed up by enforcement procedures at the local, regional and national levels. NSPI also makes available to its members the latest scientific and technological developments through seminars, workshops, publications and an annual convention and exposition. NSPI members are leaders in their field and have experience and expertise in new products and related services. Selecting an NSPI member means selecting quality you can trust.

## **Preface**

This booklet has been prepared by the National Spa & Pool Institute 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.

## **Important!**

**Aboveground/Onground swimming pools are designed for swimming and wading only. They are not designed for diving , jumping or sliding. Diving, jumping or sliding is prohibited and is product misuse.**

- Only use an aboveground/onground pool ladder or staircase to enter or exit your pool.
- Do not use diving boards, slides, trampolines or any other similar objects or platform on above-ground/onground pools
- 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.
- Always obey and enforce safety rules.
- The safety information in this booklet should be reviewed with children before using the pool.

Aboveground/onground swimming pools are intended to provide many hours of enjoyment. Sensible use of the product is key to safety. The pool owner must supervise the pool's safe use, operation and maintenance.

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

**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.**

Congratulations on being an aboveground/onground swimming pool owner! Your pool can give you, your family and guests many years of fun and relaxation.

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 you, 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 these publications provide.

Keep these materials on file for your own reference and pass them along to future owners or renters.

## **Table of Contents**

- Good Reasons for Thinking Safety First
- Drowning Prevention Tips
- Guidelines for Using Your Pool
- Supervision
- Swimming Ability
- Exercise and Fitness
- Entertaining
- One More Word on Drinking
- Overall Safe Operation and Maintenance Of Your pool
- Layers of Protection
- Equipment In and Around the Pool
- Recommended Use of Professionals
- Where You Can Find More Information

# Good Reasons for Thinking Safety First

"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."

**First-Time Users Run the Highest Risk of Injury!** Before they enter the pool, inform them of the safety rules.

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. Here are some examples:

- **Drowning** - According to the National Safety Council, drowning is a leading cause of accidental death in this country, especially for children under the age of five. Although the greatest percentage of drownings occur in natural aquatic settings, (e.g., oceans, lakes, quarries, etc.) drownings do occur in swimming pools. The water depth of any pool is sufficient for drowning to occur. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports drowning of children even in water buckets and toilets.

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.

- **Paralysis** - Do not dive, jump or slide into your aboveground/onground pool - it is not designed for these activities! Diving, jumping or sliding into an aboveground pool is prohibited and is product misuse even if it has a deep swimming area.

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! **DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!** 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.**

- **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! Always store chemicals where children cannot reach them.

- **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.

- **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. You can help ensure that your family and guests are not victims of any of these unfortunate accidents.

## Drowning Prevention Tips

Drowning prevention information is not "for someone else." It is for you. Only by increased awareness and effort can we reduce such tragedies. Drowning is one of the most common causes of accidental death for children under the age of five. This is an avoidable accident that can be prevented by constant adult supervision.

Organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Drowning Prevention Foundation, Think First, the NSPI, the Centers for Disease Control, the Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics, the YMCA of the United States, the National Rehabilitation Hospital, the National Swimming Pool Safety Committee, the Tucson Drowning Prevention Committee and the National Swimming Pool Foundation recognize that constant adult supervision is the primary element in an integrated approach to drowning prevention.

While supervision is the key to accomplishing the objective of reducing the number of submersion incidents, it is well known that, at times, children may do the unexpected, catching their supervisors off guard. Being caught off guard does occur and there may be a lapse in supervision. The NSPI has developed the Model Barrier Code. This Model Barrier Code establishes layers of protection to complement the requirement for constant adult supervision of young children around aquatic environments. 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.

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. Listed below are some safety tips that can help save young lives. For more information, write for the brochures entitled "Children Aren't Waterproof" and "Layers of Protection" from the National Spa & Pool Institute, 2111 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314.

- Never leave a child alone out of supervisory eye contact in or near the pool - not even for a second. **There is absolutely no substitute for constant adult supervision. (See Supervision Section.)**
- 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 alone. Examples of good safety behavior by adults are important to children.

- **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.
- 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.
- Never allow anyone to swim between the ladder and the pool wall or through the risers. They can become entrapped and may drown.
- Do not rely on plastic inner tubes, inflatable arm-bands or other toys to prevent accidents.
- Remove vegetation and other obstacles to ensure a clear view of the pool.
- Make certain that all doors and gates leading from the house to the pool area have a self-closing, self-latching 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.
- A fence, wall or natural barrier should be of sufficient height to keep unauthorized people out of your pool. If access gates are used, they should have a self-latching or self-closing mechanism.
- If you use a pool cover as a safety cover, it must comply with ASTM F 1346-91 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. Always completely remove the cover before using your pool. 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Keep lifesaving equipment next to the pool. These items should remain stationary and not be misplaced.
- To avoid entrapment, never use a pool if any of the grate outlets are missing or broken.
- Do not permit playful screaming for help (false alarms) which might mask a real emergency.
- Never leave children with caretakers or supervisors unless they are capable and responsible in the pool environment.

- Supervision should be continuous when the pool is in use. (When one supervisor is called away, i.e., to answer the door bell, another supervisor must be appointed immediately.)
- When the pool is not in use, the pool owner is responsible for safeguarding the pool.

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

### **In Case of Emergency:**

1. Dial the local emergency telephone numbers (911, or the appropriate 10-digit 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.

Adults in the family should be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). CPR is the combination of rescue breathing 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.

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

**"CPR training can be life-saving."**

**"Supervision, Supervision, Supervision ... is the key to prevent drowning."**

## 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

Adult supervision is the key element in getting maximum, safe enjoyment from your pool. One individual must assume primary responsibility for supervising the pool. The pool supervisor must study the contents of this booklet and be thoroughly familiar with all facets of the safe operation and maintenance of the pool. He or she must take responsibility for communicating pool safety information to all persons who enter the pool area. Designate a backup for times when the primary supervisor is unavailable.

The supervisor is responsible for enforcing "pool rules." Draw up these rules from information in this booklet and other pool safety information you can gather from informed sources, such as the manufacturers, YMCA or the American Red Cross. These rules should cover such things as the proper use pool games, consumption of food, alcoholic beverages, pool maintenance, use of electrical appliances and the handling of chemicals. The use of prescription drugs and pool use should be at the advice of the physician. Establish rules immediately. Write them in simple language and post them near the pool where they are easy to see. Use the safety information in this booklet to develop your safety rules.

These rules should be clearly communicated and understood by all persons, young and old, who use your pool. Most importantly, consistently enforce these rules. Never leave the pool unsupervised. When adult supervision is not available, even for a moment, close the pool.

It makes sense to pay special attention to educating young children and non-swimmers about important safety precautions. Make sure that your children learn how to swim. Instruction is available from groups such as Learn to Swim, Swim America, the American Red Cross, the YMCA or YWCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other similar organizations. When appropriate, you may want to also 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 swimming pool and pool area, and act responsibly.

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. **There is no substitute for adult supervision.**



## **Swimming Ability**

To properly supervise your pool, you must be able to identify "real swimmers" from "nonswimmers." This is no easy task. A working definition of a swimmer might be someone who has achieved minimum swimming proficiency by passing a certified course of instruction. Use your best judgment - many people overestimate their abilities. Keep a watchful eye for "swimmers" who appear to flounder in your pool.

If you are uncomfortable with 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. Make sure they keep to the shallow area.

If your pool is furnished with a rope and float line, refer to the manufacturer's instructions for installation and use.

Never swim alone or allow others to do so. Never swim when overtired, feeling chilled or after taking drugs or 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.

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.

## **Exercise and Fitness**

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 National Spa & Pool Institute, Publication Department, 2111 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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.

## Entertaining

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

- 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.
- Food and drink play an important part in your entertaining. Establish an area away from the pool for refreshments to prevent accidental slips or falls caused by spills near the pool or on the deck and to prevent debris from falling into 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
- Food and drink play an important part in your entertaining. Establish an area away from the pool for refreshments to prevent accidental slips or falls caused by spills near the pool or on the deck and to prevent debris from falling into the pool.
- More likely than not your guests will be bare footed 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.
- Use of alcohol or drugs do 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.
- Prohibit horseplay, especially throwing or pushing someone 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 is 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.

**"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."**

**"Alcohol or drugs do not mix with pool activities."**

### **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 beers 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.

## Layers of Protection

- Pools are attractive to children, and children must be kept away from them in the absence of adult supervision. 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. All gates or doors with access to the pool should have a self-closing and self-latching mechanism that protects against unauthorized and unsupervised entry and use. (The inside latch should be above the reach of toddlers or young children.) Check with your state and local governments to learn their specific requirements concerning barriers and other layers of protection around pools and if specific requirements do not exist, contact NSPI for its recommended Model Barrier Code and brochure entitled "Layers of Protection."
- Doors, including sliding glass patio doors, should be self-closing and self-latching to prevent entry 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. 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.

## Equipment In and Around the Pool

There are many products that you will buy to complement your pool. Be aware of all precautions related to the installation, use and maintenance of these products.

- **Pool slides, trampolines and diving boards require a greater water depth than is available in an aboveground pool. Therefore, they must not be used with aboveground pools.**
- A deck around your pool can add real beauty and enjoyment. Be sure your deck has a slip-resistant 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.
- Signage - All aboveground/onground pools should be labeled with "No Diving" signs supplied by the manufacturer 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 dam-

aged 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.

- Remember diving, jumping or sliding into an aboveground/onground pool is prohibited even if you have an attached deck!
- Insist that there be no running, pushing or roughhousing near the pool. Never throw anyone into the pool.
- Use caution as ladders may be slippery when wet.

### **Pool Covers (Solar or Insulating Only)**

• 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.** Avoid the possibility of someone being trapped under the pool cover by completely removing the cover before use. For more information see "Drowning Prevention Tips."

### **Ladders, Steps and Handrails**

- 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.
  - **\*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. Use caution as ladders may be slippery when wet.
- \*Taylor's Rule: Never swim between the wall and the ladder or through the ladder risers. Death by drowning may result.**

\*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.

## **Electrical Outlets**

- To 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), which 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.

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

## **Fitting, Grates and Drains**

- Your pool's inlet and outlet fittings, grates and skimmer and 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.
- Tell children, particularly, that these devices are not toys. Instruct all swimmers not to stick their fingers, toes or body into them. Entrapment and drowning can occur.
- Everyone with long hair should be cautioned not to get their hair near a pool outlet. The suction can cause hair or body entrapment and drowning. For example, a main drain without a proper grate can have a pull of approximately 700 lbs. - enough to hold an adult under water.

**"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 pro-perly maintained. Remember there is no substitute for adult supervision."**

## **Filter Systems**

- Most filter systems can maintain internal pressure even when shut off. Never perform work on your filter equipment without turning the system off and bleeding off the internal pressure. 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 can result if the top of a two-piece filter is blown off by air pressure that is allowed to accumulate in the tank. If you are at all unsure of how to proceed, ask your pool professional.

- 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, with the idea of replacing worn or damaged parts. Never inspect filtration equipment without being sure that the internal pressure has been bled off through the manual valve provided for that purpose. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Filtration equipment requires care in handling as well as regular maintenance and replacement of parts to function properly and efficiently.

**"Keep grates and drain covers in good repair and secured in place. Alert your family and guests to stay away from these devices, as the suction from drain outlets is strong enough to cause entrapment of hair or body parts, which can cause drowning."**

## **Heaters**

- 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 re-lighting 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.

## **Lifesaving Equipment**

- 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, a rope or life ring which can provide immediate assistance to a person in trouble. Practice using these devices correctly to be ready in an emergency. Only use these devices for emergencies. Do not allow children to play with lifesaving equipment.

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.

## **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.

## **Adequate Lighting**

- 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.

## **Maintenance of Pool Water**

- Keep the pool clean and clear of debris. For safety's sake, users of your pool 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

## **First Aid**

- 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" their own address.
- At least one person should be trained in artificial respiration and/or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Such training is available from local organizations such as the American Red Cross.

## **Chemicals**

The chemicals needed for your pool help make it clean, disinfected 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.

### **In general, here are some tips for chemical use and storage:**

- Before using chemicals, read the labels and directions carefully. Follow label use instructions.
- Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children.

## **Storage**

- Chemical reagents for test kits should be replaced each year.
- 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.
- 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.

## Usage

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

- Never mix two chemicals together. Use a clean scoop for each chemical and never combine material from "old" and "new" containers.
- Always add the chemicals directly to the pool water. Never add water to chemicals. Follow label use instructions.
- 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.
- Never add chemicals to the pool water while swimmers are using the pool.
- Carefully clean up any spilled chemicals with large amounts of water to dilute and wash away the chemicals. Check with local authorities before sending disinfectants and pH adjustment chemicals to the sewer as waste.
- Wash out empty disinfectant containers before disposing, to eliminate danger of fire, explosion or poisoning.
- Test the water in your pool with a reliable test kit on a schedule 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.

## **Electrical Maintenance**

Working with electricity is a job best left to the experts. 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.
- Do not let water accumulate on floor or deck areas where electrical switches are located.
- Do not stand in water while operating electrical components.

## **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:

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.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Parents: The life and health of you and your children as well as your friends and neighbors is important. Please practice safety and supervise your pool.

Copyright © 1995 by the National Spa & Pool Institute  
2111 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## Where You Can Find More Information

The National Spa & Pool Institute (NSPI) and the National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF) offer many publications and materials to help you enjoy your pool. They also offer informative materials on spas. Contact:

National Spa & Pool Institute  
2111 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
800-323-3996  
WWW.NSPI.ORG

National Swimming Pool Foundation  
10803 Gulfdale  
Suite 300  
San Antonio, TX 78216  
(210) 525-1227

### ***Warning:***

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