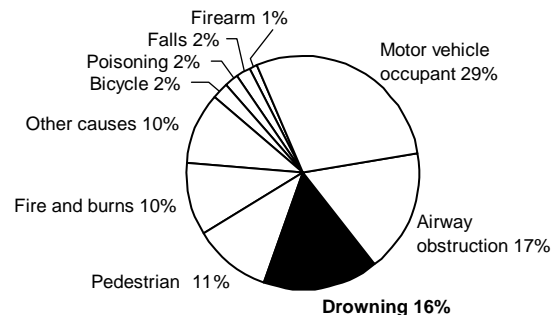




## FACTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD DROWNING

### Leading Causes of Accidental Injury-Related Death for Children 14 and Under 2004



**Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 1 to 14 and the leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 1 to 4.**

- In 2002, 838 children ages 14 and under died as a result of accidental drowning. Children ages 4 and under accounted for more than 60 percent of these deaths. The drowning death rate among children ages 14 and under declined 42 percent from 1987 to 2002.
- In 2003, nearly 4,200 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for accidental drowning-related incidents.
- According to a recent study, nearly nine in 10 drowning-related deaths occurred while a child was being supervised.
- The total annual cost of drowning among children ages 14 and under is approximately \$5.7 billion. Children ages 4 and under account for \$3.5 billion, or more than half, of these costs.
- Typical medical costs for a near-drowning victim aged 14 and under can range from more than \$8,000 for initial hospital treatment to more than \$250,000 a year for long-term care. The cost of a single near-drowning that results in brain damage can be more than \$5.5 million, including medical, work loss and quality of life costs.

### **Certain groups of children are at higher risk for drowning.**

- Children ages 4 and under have a drowning death rate more than three times greater than other age groups and account for 80 percent of home drownings.
- Male children have a drowning rate more than two times that of female children. However, females have a bathtub drowning rate twice that of males.
- Low-income children are at greater risk from non-swimming pool drownings.
- Drowning fatality rates are higher in southern and western states than in other regions of the United States. Rural areas have higher drowning death rates than urban or suburban areas, in part due to decreased access to emergency medical care.

### **More than half of drownings among infants (under age 1) occur in bathtubs.**

- More than 10 percent of all childhood drownings occur in bathtubs; the majority of these occur in the absence of adult supervision.
- Female children have a bathtub drowning rate twice that of males.
- Since 1983, there have been at least 104 deaths and 162 nonfatal incidents involving baby bath seats.
- Children can drown in as little as one inch of water and are therefore also at risk of drowning in wading pools, bathtubs, buckets, diaper pails, toilets, spas and hot tubs. Since 1984, more than 327 children, 89 percent between the ages of 7 months and 15 months, have drowned in buckets containing water or other liquids used for mopping floors and other household chores. It is estimated that 30 children drown annually in buckets.

### **More than half of drownings among children ages 1 to 4 are pool-related.**

- Among children ages 4 and under, there are approximately 300 residential swimming pool drownings each year. More than half of these drownings occur in the child's home pool, and one-third occur at the homes of friends, neighbors or relatives.
- Most children who drown in swimming pools were last seen in the home, had been missing from sight for less than five minutes and were in the care of one or both parents at the time of the drowning.
- Since 1980, more than 230 children ages 4 and under have drowned in spas and hot tubs.
- African-American males ages 5 to 9 have a swimming pool-related drowning rate four and a half times that of their white counterparts. African-American males ages 10 to 14 have a swimming pool-related drowning rate 15 times that of their white counterparts.
- Installation of four-sided isolation fencing could prevent 50 to 90 percent of childhood residential swimming pool drownings and near-drownings.

### **Children ages 5 to 14 most often drown at open-water sites (rivers, lakes and oceans).**

- In 2003, 21 children ages 14 and under drowned in reported recreational boating accidents. In 2003, 62 percent of children ages 14 and under who drowned in reported recreational boating accidents were not wearing PFDs or life jackets. It is estimated that 85 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a personal flotation device.
- In 2003, 200 children ages 14 and under sustained injuries in reported recreational boating accidents involving personal watercraft.
- Approximately half of all boating deaths occur on Saturdays and Sundays and between the months of May and August.

### **Several safety laws and regulations protect children from drowning-related hazards.**

- Four states (Arizona, California, Florida and Oregon) and many communities have enacted laws requiring some type of fencing around residential swimming pools.
- Forty-four states have enacted laws that require children to wear PFDs while participating in recreational boating. These laws vary in age requirements, exemptions and enforcement procedures. Recreational boats must carry one properly sized, U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD, accessible and in good condition, for each person onboard.