

5 Hidden Hazards of Open Water that Every Parent Should Know

It is important for families to be aware of the following hidden hazards when children are in or around open water



Limited Visibility: Water in lakes and ponds can be murky, hiding hazards such as rocks, logs and uneven surfaces. When entering unfamiliar water, go in feet first and wade out slowly.

Depth, Distance and Drop-offs:

Open water rarely has depth markings, making it difficult to know if kids are getting into water that is over their heads. When looking for a safe place to swim, choose a designated swimming area and check for signs warning about potential hazards.



Currents and Tides:

Currents in rivers, creeks and streams can be fast-moving and unpredictable. Before allowing kids to swim in open water, make sure they know how to deal with a crashing wave and escape a rip tide or strong current.

Water Temperature: Open water is usually colder than water in a pool which can affect a child's swimming ability. When participating in boating or other recreational water activities, families should remember to dress for the water temperature, rather than the air temperature, and to always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.



Weather and Seasonal Differences:

Changes in the weather can make open water more hazardous. Check the weather and water conditions before you leave home and again when you arrive. Stay alert for changes while you are on site and always stay out of the water if you hear thunder or see lightning.

NATIONAL Water Safety MONTH

With all the nice weather we have had in the Willamette Valley and with public pools closed due to Covid-19, the City of Stayton and the staff at the Stayton Family Memorial Pool want you to know, that water safety is a huge concern for us at this time. Since May is national water safety month we will be posting new information for you each week to look at. We encourage you to talk to your child(ren) about some of the dangers they may face in and around water.

- 1) All parents and caregivers need to watch children closely in the water with no distractions. Encourages all families that plan activities in or near the water to designate an adult as "Water Watcher" whenever children are present. Never assume that someone else is watching your child(ren). Many drownings occur when there are others around just because no one adult took responsibility as a [Water Watcher](#).
- 2) Remember the strongest of swimmers can drown in open water due to environmental causes. For example: unforeseen water hazards, currents, tides and water temperature.
- 3) Make sure all non and inexperienced swimmers have a [fitted approved lifejacket](#) on at all times with a parent arms length away. Do Not use blow-up floatation devise instead of an approved life jacket. These devices don't offer life-saving protection. Instead, they create an illusion of security for both parents and kids. As helpful as they may seem, don't rely on them to keep a non-swimmer or beginning swimmer afloat.

THE RISK: Anyone can drown no mater how good a swimmer you are!

- [Drowning](#) is the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for children 1 to 14 years of age and kills more children ages 1 to 4 than anything else except for birth defects. On average, three children die each day from drowning.
- Drowning risks vary by age
- Children younger than 1 year old are more likely to drown at home.
- Children between 1 and 4 years of age are more likely to drown in a home swimming pool or spa.
- Those 5 to 17 years old are more likely to drown in natural water, such as a pond or lake.
- Lack of barriers to [prevent unsupervised water access](#) is a main factor in many drowning incidents.
- Pool and spa drownings occur in public and private settings, in backyard in-ground and above-ground pools, kids' pools, apartment complexes and hotels.
- The US Consumer Product Safety Commission says that nearly 70% of young children who drowned in swimming pools were not expected to be in or at the pool.
- After pools, [bathtubs](#) are the second leading location where young children drown. However, buckets, bath seats, wells, cisterns, septic tanks, decorative ponds, and toilets, are also potential drowning sources for infants and toddlers.