

Be Water Aware, Be Safe, and Be Cool and Follow the Rules!

How can water-related injuries be prevented?

- Designate a responsible adult to watch young children while in the bath and all children swimming or playing around water.
- Always swim with a buddy. Select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or water skiing. Do not drink while supervising children.
- Learn to swim.
- Learn Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life.
- Do not use air-filled or foam toys such as "water wings", "noodles" or inner tubes, in place of life jackets (personal floatation devices). These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.
- Look before you leap into water. There is always the risk of people, rocks or obstructions where you may land.
- Pay attention to weather conditions if you are in or around natural bodies of water.
- Watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip currents.

Facts about water-related injuries:

- In 2005 there were 3582 fatal unintentional drownings in the United States, averaging ten deaths per day. An additional 710 people died from drowning and other causes in boating-related incidents.¹
- More than one in four fatal drowning victims are children 14 and younger.¹ For every child who dies from drowning, another four received emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries.¹

What are the major risk factors?

- Lack of barriers and supervision.
- Age and recreation in natural water settings (such as lakes, rivers or the ocean).
- Lack of appropriate choices in recreational boating.
- Alcohol use.
- Seizure disorder.

How is RAPRD assisting in preventing water-related injuries?

- **Staff Training** – Supervisors, Lifeguards and Swim Instructors are required to attend and participate in in-service trainings every three weeks. The in-services include learning and practicing injury prevention, lifesaving skills, instruction techniques, and patron and facility safety drills.

- **Red Cap Drills** – Red Cap Drills are run twice a month throughout the facility. They are drills that require the lifeguard and/or staff to recognize and respond to pseudo emergencies during an open swim time with patrons in the pools. The guards are timed and evaluated.
- **500 meter swims** – These are required swims from each swim staff member. They are completed bi-monthly and are timed. The purpose for these swims is to keep each staff strong and toned to help in an emergency and to know personally, swim techniques when instructing.
- **Swim Lessons**- This program is continually available for the community of all ages to participate in. Our learn-to-swim program teaches safety, swimming skills and stroke development and improvement. Lessons are run in groups or privately. Our program objective mirrors that of the American Red Cross Water Safety Course; “to teach people to swim and to be safe in, on and around the water”.²
- **Professional Development/Continuing Education** – American Red Cross courses are offered frequently throughout the year in our district. We have trained professionals on staff who direct and teach these classes. CPR and First Aid are offered, for certification, to the community every other month. Water Safety Instructors certification and Lifeguard certification are made available for people to participate in twice a year, winter and spring. Online education, conferences and webinars are encouraged for all staff.
- **EAP** - The Emergency Action Plan that is in place is reviewed and used in trainings regularly. The plan is in place so each staff member knows what is expected of them and can operate quickly and efficiently in case of an emergency.
- **State Compliance** – The state of Oregon requires us to stay in compliance with the laws and regulations regarding pool, spa, and spray park use and safety. Inspections of our pool facility are made regularly. Our standards for water quality and safety are high.
- **CPO** – Certified Pool/Spa Operators are individuals who have studied and completed course work for training in the most advanced techniques in safety, water chemistry, maintenance, and management of pools. These trained individuals are a part of our staff, working daily in and around the water to keep it clean and safe.
- **Safety Committee** – An active safety committee, made up of staff from each department, meets monthly to assess, review and recommend injury prevention options and improvements throughout the facilities and the district. A task list of needed repairs, suggestions, and recommendations is created and distributed at these meetings.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2008)[cited 2008 March 23]. Available from:www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.

² Guide for Training American Red Cross Water Safety Instructors. ©2004 by The American Red Cross