

# Water Watchers – How to Enjoy Every Aquatic Adventure?

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Each year as the weather warms up and “Sunny San Diego” lives up to its namesake, we all flock to the beautiful local beaches, lounge around our community pool or spend the afternoon with friends in our backyard pool and spa. While these long lazy days are filled with smiles and laughter, without the proper safety precautions these same days can quickly take a tragic turn. Without constant supervision, children in the water or next to the water can drown in an instant, often making little to no sound to alert those around of their predicament.

According to the CDC in the United States, there is an average of ten deaths a day due to unintentional drowning. Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14.

According to the California Department of Health in 2008, the San Diego Area tied with the Bay/Central Valley Area for the most drowning incidents within the state of California.

The good news is, when the proper steps and precautions are utilized on a continuing basis, Drowning IS Preventable. To prevent water tragedies, it is necessary to recognize the dangers of all forms and bodies of water. First, it is important to realize that drowning does not always occur in a pool, spa, ocean or even a lake. Children under one most often drown in bathtubs, buckets, or toilets. Any child that is left unsupervised around water is at danger.

After the dangers are recognized, one must learn what precautionary measures should be taken to reduce the risk around the aquatic environment. While the risks of drowning can never be completely eliminated, they can be minimized with a multi-layered approach to creating and maintaining a safer aquatic environment. SAFER 3 is The Swim for Life Foundation’s multi-layered approach to the prevention of accidental drowning. Safer Water...Safer Kid’s...Safer Response are the three elements of the SAFER 3 program.

## Safer Water

Install, maintain and utilize proper fencing, gates, gate latches, alarms and other safety equipment around the pool.

## Safer Kids

Employ constant adult supervision and swim skill attainment through on-going qualified instruction. Learn proper behavior in and around the water. **Always assign an adult “Water-Watcher” who is able to swim; children should never be left in or near a pool unattended, not even for a minute.**

## Safer Response

Learn CPR, first-aid, and rescue techniques. Keep an emergency action plan and phone by the pool at all times.

We must recognize that there is no single answer to drowning prevention, but taking a multi-layered approach is the best way to create safer water environments. Since water activities are such a core part of our lives here in “Sunny San Diego,” there are many resources for us to utilize to effectively use the SAFER 3 techniques. Noonan Family Swim School promotes water safety using the SAFER 3 methods; with four locations throughout San Diego and Riverside Counties, they are a great place to start your SAFER 3 approach to creating safer aquatic adventures. For more information regarding SAFER 3, The Swim for Life Foundation or Noonan Family Swim School visit their websites at: [www.safer3.org](http://www.safer3.org), [www.swimforlife.org](http://www.swimforlife.org), [www.noonanfamilyswimschool.com](http://www.noonanfamilyswimschool.com).

Remember to keep those long lazy days filled with smiles and laughter ALWAYS assign an adult “Water-Watcher” when enjoying an aquatic adventure!