

Be Red Cross Ready

Home Pool and Hot Tub Maintenance and Safety

Owning a pool or hot tub comes with many responsibilities. These include taking steps for proper operation, such as keeping the water clean and at an appropriate temperature. Responsible ownership also includes taking steps for safe use, such as providing layers of protection. The **Home Pool Essentials: Maintenance and Safety** online course can help you learn to make pool care easier and make pool or hot tub areas safer.

Layers of Protection

A pool or hot tub is only as safe as its weakest link.

- Keep children under active supervision.
- Secure your pool or hot tub with appropriate barriers.
- Remove any structures that provide unsupervised access.
- Establish and enforce rules.
- Make sure everyone knows how to swim well.
- Know how to respond in an emergency.

Maintenance: What Should I Do?



Maintain a Safe and Clean Pool or Hot Tub.

- Store chemicals out of children's reach.
- Pool and hot tub main drains must be clearly visible, intact and properly attached.
- Use qualified professionals to repair or replace equipment.
- Follow all manufacturers' directions for operation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Maintain proper disinfectant and pH levels all the time. Test the water regularly.

Ensure Good Water Clarity.

Effective disinfection, water circulation and filtration are keys to keeping the water clear.

- Contaminants are always entering the water from swimmers, the air, runoff, leaves, pollen and other outside sources. Keep the water clear of debris and vacuum often.
- Don't let anyone who has diarrhea into the water.
- Consider running your pump longer during high use times or periods when it is hot or rainy.

Use Chemicals Safely.

- Read directions and safety information on all chemicals you use.
- Never add water to chemicals. Always add the chemical to large amounts of water and pour slowly.
- Never mix chemicals.
- Always keep chemicals in their original containers and replace covers properly.
- Always clean up spills immediately.
- Use appropriate protective equipment when handling chemicals.

Safety: What Should I Do?



Understand the Risks.

- Home pool drowning is a leading cause of death for children younger than 5.
- Children were often out of sight less than 5 minutes and under the care of one or both parents at the time of many home pool drownings.*
- It is never safe to dive in an aboveground pool. Many inground pools are not safe for diving.

Take Action to Prevent Drowning.

- Secure your pool or hot tub with barriers such as these:
 - Surround the entire pool with a fence or barrier that is at least 4 feet high, has a self-closing and self-latching gate and is designed so that a child cannot climb over, under, around or through it.
 - Remove or enclose steps or ladders to prevent access to an aboveground pool.
 - Mount a lockable structural barrier that fully encloses the top of a hot tub and will not collapse under the weight of a child.
- Consider placing a safety cover that meets safety standards over the pool and/or installing alarms on doors or in the pool to detect unauthorized access. Underwater alarms work best.*
- Keep children under active supervision when in or around the water.
- Have weak swimmers wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket—do not rely on water wings or inflatable toys.
- Remove any pool toys from the pool or hot tub area when the area is not in use.
- Do not use alcohol and/or drugs before or while using a pool or hot tub.
- Establish and enforce rules, such as no one swims alone, stay away from drains, no loose/dangling items and no diving (if appropriate). Obey set limits for how much time is spent in hot water.
- Children younger than 5 should not use a hot tub. Pregnant women or people with chronic medical conditions should obtain a health care provider's approval.

How Do I Prepare?



Make Sure Everyone Knows How to Swim Well.

- Enroll everyone in the home in American Red Cross water safety and learn-to-swim courses.

Know How to Respond in an Emergency.

- Take the Home Pool Essentials: Maintenance and Safety online course.
- Learn how to safely respond to aquatic and other emergencies by taking Red Cross courses, such as First Aid, CPR, Lifeguarding and Basic Water Rescue.

Outfit Your Pool or Hot Tub with Appropriate Safety Equipment.

At a minimum, pool and hot tub owners should keep the following equipment readily accessible:

- Phone with emergency information posted near it
- First aid kit
- Emergency signal, such as a whistle
- Multiple life jackets in various sizes
- Reaching device (pool owners)
- Throwing device (pool owners)

Caution: No One Is "Drownproof."

Participation in any swim lesson program cannot "drownproof" your child, despite what some may claim. No child is ever "drownproof" or water safe.

- Water safety and learn-to-swim courses should be age-appropriate.
- Learning to swim well takes time. Do not expect that children will learn to swim in one set of lessons or even in one season.

Enter promotion code **HPS2009** when you register for Home Pool Essentials at HomePoolEssentials.org and receive a 10 percent discount!

Find Out More About ...

- Home Pool Essentials: Maintenance and Safety—HomePoolEssentials.org.
- Specific safety recommendations at U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission—poolsafety.gov.
- Additional water-safety information at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—healthyswimming.org.

*Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



For more information about the National Swimming Pool Foundation, please visit nspf.org. For information on learn-to-swim and other Red Cross courses, contact your local American Red Cross chapter or visit RedCross.org.