

GEORGE'S TAKE

ON THE POOL

SUBMERSION YEARLY

REPORT SUBMITTED BY CPSC

Last week the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) released their annual Pool or Spa Submersion: Estimated injuries and reported fatalities, report of 2013. This analysis was prepared by CPSC staff and has not been reviewed or approved by, and may not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission. Estimates were rounded to the nearest hundred. For an aquatic specialist this report is vital to help one understand the incidents that may take place in swimming pools. Before one can correct a problem, one has to review data and then understand the problem. That is where this annual report glides in.....estimated #'s to help one have a better picture of the problem at hand. The simple methodology for pool or spa submersion is "drowning" is defined as suffocation and death resulting from filling of the lungs with water or other substance or fluid, so that gas exchange becomes impossible. A "near drowning" is defined as survival for any length of time after submersion in water and temporary suffocation. This definition of submersion is defined and recorded in 2003 in the Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, 30th edition, Saunders-2003. One can now start to cross reference the data with the NSPF data base that includes information on related pool closures, lawsuits and submersion data.

Some of the key findings in the 2013 CPSA report on Pool or Spa Submersion are:

- There were an estimated 5,100 pool- or spa- related hospital emergency department treated submersion injuries*.
- 67% of the reported fatalities and 78 % of the emergency department treated involve children younger than 5 years of age.
- Residential locations dominated incidents involving victims younger than 5 years old.
- Most reported fatalities occurred on the day of (68%) or within a week of (an additional 25%) the submersion incident.
- Approximated 59% of fatalities occurred in in-ground pools. Above ground pools accounted for 15% and portable pools accounted for 9% of the reported fatalities.

So a very simple way to view the above findings is to realize suffocation drowning fatalities will most likely happen very quickly. Also 5 year old children that are swimming in a residential in ground pool are the most likely to be get themselves in trouble while swimming. A very simple view to share with any home owner or any interesting party.

Sadly the report is fed information from National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) from U.S. hospitals emergencies departments and all hospitals are still not classifying term "submersion" correctly. In the Los Angeles area, two submersion incidents took place in 2012 that I know of and was not properly recorded as submersions. I am sure these two incidents are not the only cases getting miss recorded.

* Annual estimates for 2010-2012.