

# Water Safety Tips

from  
**The Greater Pensacola Aquatic Club**

**Learn How to Swim** – Learn to swim before you go into the water. Sounds silly, but many people think it will come naturally, and it really doesn't. Drowning is the number ONE cause of accidental deaths among children and the number TWO cause among people 15 to 44 years of age. Many organizations in and around Pensacola offer swimming lessons all year long, contact one today!

**Be Careful around Water** – Nearly 2/3rds of America's drowning victims never intended to be in the water. Be especially cautious of small child who wander away. Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water.

**Swim near a Lifeguard** – Pools typically have lifeguards but nearby lakes, rivers and some beaches do not. These individuals are trained to help you if you get into trouble.

**Never Swim Alone** – Using the buddy system works in the water as well. A buddy can call for help or even save your life themselves.

**Safety Rules!** - Set water safety rules for your family (for example, never enter the water without approval from your parents).

**TOO'S** – Keep in mind the the "dangerous too's" - too cold, too far from safety, too tired, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

**Wear a Life Jacket** – If you are not a good swimmer or if you are boating, kayaking or canoeing wear your Life Jacket.

**Be Aware** – Be aware of your surroundings. The beach has many more dangers than your backyard pool. Currents can change quickly. If you are not an expert swimmer, stay close to shore or in waist-level water. Be on guard for large waves, rip tides/undertows and hazardous animals, such as jellyfish.

**Don't Dive** - Always enter the water feet first. Every year, diving accidents result in more than 8,000 people suffering paralyzing spinal cord injuries and another 5,000 dying before they reach the hospital. All too often, hidden dangers lurk beneath the surface of the water, including rock outcrops or shallow water.

**Reach, Throw, Row, Go** – This is a simple way to remind yourself of how to help a possible victim of drowning. Try to reach an object like a rope or a pole to them and pull them to safety. Try to throw them something that floats, preferably something with a rope attached like a ring buoy or rescue tube. If you are near open water you can row a canoe or kayak to them. **If you are a good swimmer** and the other options did not work, go to them, and bring a floatation device strong enough to support you both, a struggling swimmer can take you under with them. Position the device so that it stays between you and the victim as you float to safety.

**Stay Sober** – Nearly ½ of the people who drown yearly in America have consumed alcohol prior to swimming.

