

# Water Safety

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I know here at OAWU we focus on helping communities provide clean, safe drinking water to the people living within their area. As summer has arrived and everyone is planning the summer get-aways, water still plays a huge role but in a very different way!!

There are many disturbing and sad statistics concerning water related deaths throughout the country affecting families and communities throughout the United States. Did you know that drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death for children and adolescents from the age of birth to 22 years old? I could never imagine the pain and guilt involved when losing a family member because of bad judgment, bad choices or for any other reason. Education and implementation of safety rules within the family is crucial. I know that when the sun is shining and everyone is having a blast; that beers seem to flow freely and the attention on the children suffers! We have to set rules, not only for the children but also for the adults and make sure that they are followed closely!!!! (It is amazing how much more you preach the older you get)!!! Below I am going to give some pointers that will help this summer but you have to do more than just read them!

## SAFETY TIPS FOR THE LAKE

- ❖ Cold water in lakes can be lethal. It is often much colder beneath the surface than you think; suddenly getting into cold water can cause distress, shock, and lack of mobility. If you feel cold, get out of the water immediately!
- ❖ Large lakes and rivers may look calm, but remember wind will cause choppy waves that make it dangerous to swim.
- ❖ The bottom of lakes and rivers can be soft, uneven and changeable. Beware of submerged objects. Enter the water feet first.
- ❖ Floating toys are great fun to play with. Take care on windy days when you can easily be blown away from shore.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR THE RIVER

- ❖ River currents are often stronger than they appear. You can throw in a twig to check how fast and strong the current is.
- ❖ Submerged objects can be very dangerous. Keep watch for trees, branches, rocks and rubbish.
- ❖ If you are caught in a current, float on your back and travel downstream feet first to protect your head from impact with any objects. Angle your travel towards shore.
- ❖ Remember, river conditions can change rapidly due to heavy rainfall or the release of water from storage areas. An area that is safe in the morning can be dangerous in the afternoon.

## POOL SAFETY

- ❖ Don't run around the pool edge, you could slip and get hurt or hurt someone else.
- ❖ Never throw someone in as a joke. They may hit their head on the side of the pool.
- ❖ Avoid backyard pool parties with unsupervised children.
- ❖ Don't jump in without checking to make sure no one is below you.
- ❖ Take any small children with you if the phone rings or if you have a task that must be accomplished.
- ❖ Always have adult supervision, even adults' need supervision at times!

Summer is the best time of the year with so many memories and fun times being made. Just look at the family photo album and most pictures are at a lake, river or some other water source! I am not trying to preach, but please have a great summer and be **SAFE!!**