

BOOKING YOUR VACATION: What to Ask

- What water features are at or in the vicinity of the hotel or rental? Bathtub, pool, hot tub, koi pond, fountain, marina, dock, lake, pond, ocean, river?
- Do water features have barriers such as fencing?
- Is the water feature regularly maintained & tested?
- Does management provide water safety information or demonstrations specific to the site? Do they have an emergency action plan?
- Is local emergency information posted, along with the address of the pool or waterfront property?
- What are the local open water safety regulations? Are there beach/lake hours?
- What is the expected weather during the vacation?
- Is there any marine life migration (jellyfish, sharks, whales) expected at time of your vacation?
- Are lifeguards present? If so, what hours? Are lifeguards also available near where I'm staying?
- What is your cell phone coverage in the area?
- Is water rescue equipment available? Life preserver or reaching pole?
- Are alarms on doors with direct access to water?
- Are there storage bins for pool toys?
- Is a first aid kit available?
- If boating, are all sizes of lifejackets available?
- Book water adventure excursions only with reputable companies and experienced guides.

PREPARING AND PACKING

- Take swim lessons & refresh water survival skills.
- Learn basic water rescue skills, enroll in course.
- Refresh CPR and first aid skills.
- Download Apps: ARC's *Swim* for water safety tips, Supervision timer and CPR assist: *Water Watcher*; AHA's *CPR & First Aid*; *Resuscitate!*, *RescueMeCPR*
- Have a family meeting about vacation water safety.
- PACK: a Water Watcher card and use it actively when around water; US Coast Guard (USCG) certified life vests, first aid kit, CPR masks for adult and child.
- MORE PACKING: bright colored swimsuits, sun block, water bottles, beach cover-ups, sun hats, sunglasses.
- CELL PHONE PREP: Research your plan's service coverage for the area & amend if necessary. Pack charger cords and block, power bank, waterproof pouch, plug adaptor for international travel.
- Consider purchasing and packing portable door alarms and body alarms as an added layer of protection. *Not a substitute for supervision.*

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Check for all surrounding water features.
- Examine water features for areas hidden from view.
- Find and read safety signage; note any closed areas.
- Access if all barriers, including self-closing, self-latching gates are functioning properly.
- Find out any designated swim hours.
- Review with family members how to call emergency.
- Identify local emergency # and address. Post both prominently. DIY if necessary.
- If you don't speak the local language, make a plan for emergency communication with authorities.
- Confirm lifeguard schedule. Remember that your supervision is the first layer of protection.
- Ask if there are any water borne illnesses present in the area (red tide, fresh water amoebas, E.coli...)
- Learn and follow the local beach flag warning system and where to can find signs about water conditions.

BEST PRACTICES DURING VACATION: Drowning is fast and silent. Use layers of protection!

70% of toddler drownings happen during non-swim time, mostly in tubs and pools. Older kids are at higher risk in lakes and oceans.

- Review the family water safety plan.
- Place emergency supplies in a designated area and ensure address and local emergency # are posted.
- Remind children of all ages to always ask permission before going near or in any water.
- Never swim alone! Use a buddy system.
- Check weather conditions, temperature and currents.
- Constant, vigilant supervision; Water Watcher tags.
- Stay within arm's reach of inexperienced swimmers.
- An estimated 40% of child drownings happen during pool parties – keep guard up during parties.
- Supplies for every outing: water bottle, sunblock, first aid kit, CPR masks and a charged cell phone.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs while watching anyone around water - it impairs attention and reactivity.
- Take breaks every hour for bathroom and rest.
- After swimming is done for the day: Ensure any gates or covers are secured. Store all pool toys and accessories. Never leave any toys/rafts in the water.
- Choose lifeguarded beaches when possible and remind children to swim near the lifeguard.
- Wear lifejackets when in and around open water.
- Check depth, and don't dive if less than 9', or if bottom can't be seen.
- Family should know how to extricate from a rip tide.
- If a child is missing, always check the water first!