

Safety Fact Sheet

Inflatable or Portable Swimming Pools



What is an inflatable or portable swimming pool?

Inflatable or portable pools are pools which can be inflated or assembled as required.

How many children may be injured when using an inflatable or portable swimming pool?

Drowning:

- Toddlers can drown in as little as 5 cm of water. Pools left unattended are a potential drowning hazard.
- Children may drown in small amounts of water collected in inflatable or portable pools as a result of rain or nearby sprinklers.

Electrocution

- Portable electrical pumps and filter systems can cause electrocution if not used properly.

Infection

- Children can become ill when pool water is left uncleaned for long periods of time.

How common are these injuries?

Drowning is a leading cause of death among children aged five years or less. From 2001-2006, an average of 11 drowning deaths occurred annually within NSW with a further 85 children hospitalised for near drowning (NSW CHO Report, 2008). This equates to 7-8 children being hospitalised for each child drowning death in this age group (NSW CHO Report, 2008). Of near drowning incidents, 5-20% of children will suffer some form of brain damage ranging from mild to severe (RLSSA NSW 2001).

Children aged less than five years of age have the highest drowning mortality rate of any age group. Between 2003 and 2007, 48 children aged under the age of five drowned in NSW, with approximately 50% of the drowning deaths occurring in swimming pools (Royal Life Saving NSW, 2007).

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for inflatable or portable swimming pools?

The law in NSW states that all pools able to be filled with water to 300mm or more in depth, must be surrounded by a safety barrier separating the swimming pool from any residential building and any place adjoining the premises. Fences around pools must be designed, constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with the Australian Standard (AS 1926.1 - 2007).

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The law also states that owners/occupiers of a property with a swimming pool that is able to be filled to 300mm or more in depth should:

- Maintain child-resistance barriers so they are effective.
- Ensure all doors and gates providing access to the swimming pool are kept securely closed at all times.
- Ensure that at all times a warning sign is displayed in the area near the pool. This sign should be clearly visible and contain approved resuscitation techniques.

Remember:

- Always read the labels on inflatable and portable swimming pools. Warning information can vary depending on the height of the pool.
- If using an electric pump, fit a Safety Switch to the house where the pool will be used. Check that the pump and filter have an electrical safety approval number or Regulatory Compliance Mark.
- Ask an electrician to install a suitable electrical power point near the pool so you don't have to use extension cords.
- For pools above 300mm in height, consult your council on fencing requirements and child-resistant barriers and display a warning sign with approved resuscitation techniques.
- Always supervise children in inflatable and portable swimming pools.
- Ensure the water is kept pure.
- Empty the pool and store it away from children when not in use.

Population Health Division. The health of the people of New South Wales - Report of the Chief Health Officer. Sydney: NSW Department of Health. Available at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/chorep/. Accessed (18 September 2009).

Royal Life Saving Society Australia (2001). The 2001 New South Wales Drowning Report. Royal Life Saving Society Australia, NSW.

Royal Life Saving Society Australia (2007). The 2007 New South Wales Drowning Report. Royal Life Saving Society Australia, NSW.

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only.

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