

Safety Fact Sheet

Water Feature Safety



What are water features?

Water features are structures designed to attractively display water and water movement. Water features include ponds, fountains and waterfalls.

How many children be injured around a water feature?

Drowning

Children may fall into the water contained in a water feature and drown. As young children are top heavy, they may drown in as little as 5cm of water. Once a child's face is submerged, the child is unable to pull their face out of the water.

How common are these injuries?

Between 1997 and 2002 in Western Australia, water features were the third most common place for drowning deaths to occur in the home. Of the drowning deaths that occurred at home, the most common venues were, swimming pools (66%), bathtubs (21%) and water features (7%)¹.

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for water features?

There are no laws or Australian Standards relating to water features. Please keep in mind the safety reminders below when considering the installation or maintenance of a water feature.

Remember:

The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommends that you drain any water features you may have and stop their usage for the period of time when your children are young and do not understand the danger associated with them.

If you wish however, to retain a water feature with young children around, please follow the safety recommendations below;

- Install a rigid metal mesh above the water level of your water feature. The mesh must be able to support the weight of a child above the water level.
- Ensure that the mesh gaps measure between 5cm and 8.5cm.
- Ensure that the mesh is firmly secured to the water feature and regularly checked for signs of deterioration.
- Never allow small children to play around the feature without adult supervision.

¹ RLSSA-West Australian Branch, 2002. (<http://cat5.poolsafety.com.au>)

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only.

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