

Watch your kids around water!

As the weather becomes warmer the allure to get back into the pool is inviting. Your Fountain Hills firefighters want to remind everyone that water safety practices and constant supervision is the cure to prevent child drowning and non-fatal drowning incidents. During this time of the year firefighters are preparing for brush fires and heat related incidents, but what gives them a greater concern is the call for a child that has drowned. Firefighters know that it only takes a short pause in supervision where a child can slip away and fall into a pool or any open body of water. Although there are documented drownings for each month of the year, they significantly increase during the spring and summer. Most children drown in backyard pools, but some children drown in areas of open water, toilets, buckets and bathtubs. The leading cause of death in Arizona for children ages 1 to 4 is drowning. This year there has already been 18 water related incidents involving children in the greater Phoenix area resulting in 3 deaths. Fountain Hills is not immune, just last week a young 2 year old girl went under water for a brief time resulting in a non-fatal drowning. There are proven steps that can be made to prevent child drowning and the first is still the most important. **Constant supervision is the rule.** In addition to supervision there are other pre-cautions that provide additional safety for your child.

--Never leave a child unattended in the water or pool area for any reason. Don't be distracted by doorbells, phone calls, chores, iPods or conversations. If you must leave the pool area, take the child with you, making sure the pool self closing gate latches securely when it closes. Keep your eyes and ears open at all times.

--Never lose focus on children during pool parties or gatherings. Designate yourself or a capable person to be the child water watcher who must be in constant contact with kids in or around the pool.

--Use an approved barrier to separate the pool from the house and repair broken gates, fences, and nets

--Keep climbing objects away from pool fences such as tables, chairs or large play toys

--Don't leave toys or floating devices in pool area, children will be drawn to retrieve them.

--Educate babysitters, Grandparents and care givers on water safety if they watch your children

--If your child ever goes under water and appears to have breathed in water call 9-1-1

--Swimming lessons are a good tool, but panic can distort routine practices

--Learn CPR, classes are available every month through the Towns Parks and recreation department.

- Visit www.childrensafetyzone.com for comprehensive information regarding child safety issues.