

There have been 302 drowning deaths – the highest figure in six years.

# Keep an eagle eye at the pool

IT is estimated that more than one in five Australian homes have a swimming pool and with Queensland's perfect weather, the water is the place to be!

But beware, this great Aussie icon can be dangerous.

The Royal Life Saving Society's National Drowning Report for 2009 revealed 302 drowning deaths – the highest figure in six years.

This is a wakeup call to parents, especially when we consider that 32 deaths were in the under five years age group. Of these more than 60 per cent were in backyard pools.

With summer well upon us, parents need to be reminded not to be complacent about supervision, the primary layer of protection in the prevention of drowning.

So what constitutes supervision and what is the best way to ensure

## Swim safe

With  
Julie Ham



everybody enjoys swimming? Supervision has several components, including:

- 100 per cent undivided attention. Supervision is not an activity that can be done while doing something else.

- A preparedness to get wet. The 0-5 year age bracket requires you to keep watch within arm's length. So get in with them. This enables parents to spend quality time with their kids, splashing about and having fun.

- Ignoring distractions. Never allow phones, doorbells, socialising or other siblings/children to let your attention wander.

- Never leaving a child/sibling in charge of supervising. Drowning also occurs where siblings are left in



**BE RESPONSIBLE:** Supervision is the primary layer of protection to stop drowning.

charge. Children are easily distracted and do not have the appropriate skills to deal with the situation.

- When barbecues and social events delegate a supervisor role to several available adults. Ensure they are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

- Remember ... of the 60 per cent of backyard pool drownings, 85 per cent were a result

of children falling in while playing around the pool area. This means that supervision extends not only to periods of swimming, but also to when children are out of the water too.

It is our responsibility to provide our children with every available opportunity to call upon another layer of protection to assist them in the event that we are not

there to help. The other layers include sufficient barriers/pool enclosures, teaching children how to swim and water safety skills, and also learning CPR as backups.

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