

# Did You Know?

## Key Facts About Unintentional Drowning

The American Red Cross is committed to helping everyone be water competent—from learning to swim, and how to be in the water safely, to managing emergencies in and around the water. Why is this so important? Here are some hard facts.\*

- Overall drowning rates decreased between 2005 and 2009—still, close to 4,000 people die from unintentional drowning every year.
- Males die from drowning at a rate significantly higher than females.
- Children are at the greatest risk for unintentional drowning.
- Non-fatal drowning affects more people than fatal drowning does—children are at the greatest risk.
- Drownings in natural water settings increase with age—half of fatal drowning victims under four drowned in swimming pools.

### Water Safety Is A Must

The Red Cross wants every family to make sure both adults and children can swim and know water safety. At the most basic level there are five skills you should know. These critical water safety skills, also known as “water competency,” are the ability to:

- Step or jump into the water over your head.
- Return to the surface and float or tread water for one minute.
- Turn around in a full circle and find an exit.
- Swim 25 yards to the exit.
- Exit from the water. If in a pool, be able to exit without using the ladder.



*Be Water Safe.  
Start Today.*

**Learn** about Red Cross Lifeguarding, Learn-to-Swim and water safety programs. Visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).

**Download** the Red Cross Swim App and have water safety tips with you on-the-go. VISIT [redcross.org/apps](http://redcross.org/apps), TEXT 'SWIM' to 90999 or SEARCH 'Red Cross Swim' in the Apple App Store, Google Play or Amazon Marketplace.

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