

BRINGING WATER SAFETY HOME



WATER INSIGHT, SAFETY & EDUCATION





WATER SAFETY AT HOME

For all of us, 'home' is the place where we feel safest. It's a symbol of warmth, comfort and protection. Yet, like anywhere, it is also home to a host of potential dangers. By knowing what to look out for, and what you can do to protect yourself and those you care for, you can help make your home safer for all.

WHAT IS DROWNING?

Any person who died as a result of the submersion in, and inhalation of, water is deemed to have drowned.

Consider this, a motorist whose car plunges off a pier into the cold sea water and could not escape, did not die as a result of the car accident, but rather a consequence of the submersion in, and inhalation of water. Similarly, consider a person who has a stroke or heart attack whilst in the water for a swim. The pain of the attack will cause the person to struggle, and will induce panic. But the cause of death is drowning due to the inhalation of water.

HOW MUCH WATER DOES IT TAKE TO DROWN?

Drowning can occur in just 6 inches of water. Baths, paddling pools, drains, barrels, and ponds all contain enough water to potentially drown a person.

UNBELIEVABLE?

Not if a person is unconscious, immobile or if it's a small child who can't lift their head. There are all sorts of drowning risks at home and if you live on a farm, there are even more.



FACT

Globally, the highest drowning rates are among children 1–4 years.

(W.H.O)





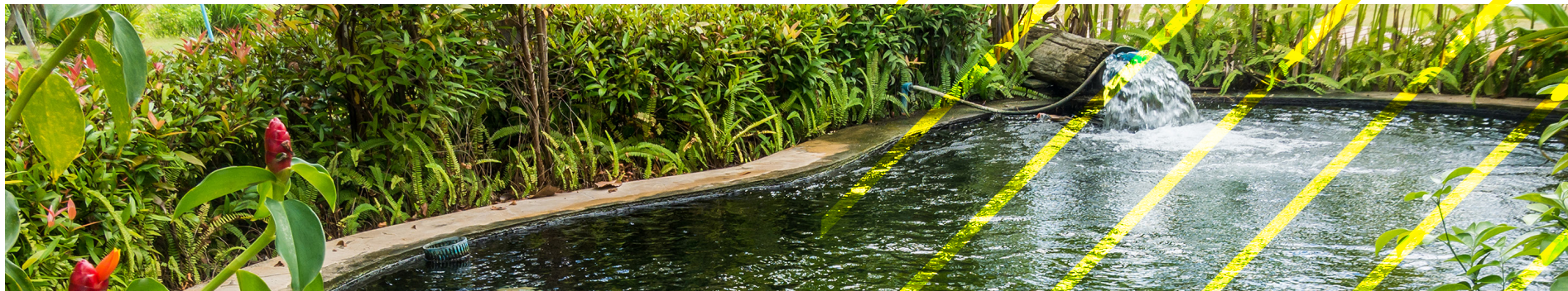
PONDS, TROUGHS, WATER BUTTS, BUCKETS, ETC.

Any accessible body of water is a potential danger, for all the same reasons as a bath can be. It's safest to cover them, fence them off, or in the case of buckets and containers, store them upside down.

Ponds can be particularly dangerous. Fish ponds need to be a few feet deep to provide enough water for fish and plantings. What's more, fish and flowers draw you near. Banks are often sloped and, if the pond is homemade, can be prone to collapse. A solid metal cover provides real peace of mind. In winter, falling through thin ice creates extra danger. Supervision, especially of young children is key at all times. Remember, it just takes six inches to drown.

DITCHES & DRAINS

A drainage ditch is a depression in the land created to channel water. They're typically formed in low-lying areas along roadsides and fields near a water body. They are also created to channel water from a more distant water source for the purpose of plant irrigation. Most have naturally dug or eroded banks, which can have unstable, slippery, and crumbly edges. Combine those with soft and uneven ground and they become potentially lethal. What's more, drain water can be freezing cold. Without the availability of immediate assistance, any person who enters a drain can find it extremely difficult to get out.



NATURAL FEATURES; OCEAN / LAKES / RIVERS / STREAMS / PONDS

When you think of water safety at home, it's important to consider the natural features that surround it. Many people live in locations with streams and rivers in their backyards. Others have lakes nearby. Some live near the beach. We're never too far from water, and it's important to always be conscious of that.

FLOODING

Due to the climate we live in, flooding can be a very real risk. It can be caused by long spells of bad weather or short but intense bursts of rain. Entire towns and villages have been completely submerged due to one blocked or faulty drainage outlet in a matter of hours. Regardless of how big or small a flood is, if the conditions necessary to drown are present, there is a risk associated. A big puddle of water in the corner of a garden or on a nearby lane, can seem like a playground to small children.



WATER SAFETY ON THE FARM

On farms there are other potential dangers to be aware of. Plus, hazards like ditches, ponds and water barrels are more numerous. It's important to recognise the potential risks and educate those younger than you to avoid them.

ANIMAL DRINKING TROUGHS

Unlike ponds, these are often raised and open to ensure animals can drink from them more easily. As such, they can be accessed by children.

SLURRY TANKS / PITS

These are holes in the ground or concrete structures where farmers gather all their animal waste together with other unusable organic matter, such as hay and water run-off from washing down dairies, stables, and barns. This is then converted into fertiliser. To empty them, farmers often have to lift slats or remove covers. As these tend to be both large and heavy, farmers are not inclined to put them back until the job is complete. This leaves a gaping hole into which an unsuspecting person can fall and drown.

TO PROTECT AGAINST DROWNING:

- All slurry tanks should be fenced off to prevent access. These should be 1.8 meters high and unclimbable.
- During slurry agitation or emptying, all access points should be closed or guarded.
- Ensure that children are supervised and warned of the dangers of slurry, especially before slurry related work is to take place.



FACT

In the period 2000-2010, 30% of child fatal accidents on farms were caused by drowning in slurry or water. In the same period 8% of deaths to elderly farmers were caused by drowning.

(hsa.ie)





**ENSURE THAT CHILDREN
ARE **SUPERVISED** AND **WARNED**
OF THE DANGERS OF SLURRY PITS**

ESSENTIAL LEARNING

1

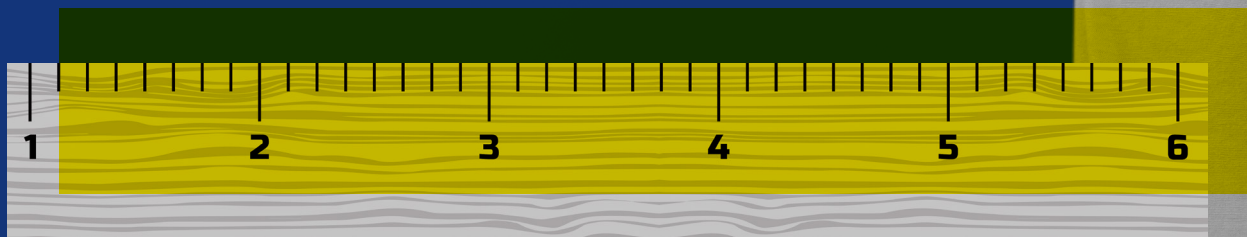
DROWNING CAN OCCUR IN JUST 6 INCHES OF WATER. BATHS, PADDLING POOLS, DRAINS, BARRELS AND PONDS ALL CONTAIN ENOUGH WATER TO DROWN A PERSON.

2

SMALLER CHILDREN ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK IN AND AROUND THE HOME. THEY SHOULD BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES.

3

EVERY HOMEOWNER SHOULD PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY ANY POTENTIAL DROWNING HAZARDS IN AND AROUND THEIR HOME AND PUT PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IN PLACE.



HOME

Your Aunt Sarah is babysitting for the weekend and has decided to bathe your little brother Thomas. However she doesn't have kids and hasn't done it before. She fills the bath making sure it isn't too hot or too deep. Sarah puts Thomas into the bath and he loves it. He's got a squirting duck and laughs as he splashes Aunt Sarah. You hear her mobile ring and her answering it. You can hear your brother giggling. You're sure she has things under control.

RISK ASSESSMENT:

- What dangers are there?
- Should Sarah have answered her phone?
- Should she have even had it with her?
- What other potential distractions should be ignored?
- How close should she always be to Thomas when he's in the bath?

ABILITY ANALYSIS:

- Could Thomas have been left alone?
- What are the possible consequences of leaving Thomas alone?

GARDEN

You've got a beautiful garden. It slopes down to a small brook that curves past your house. It's not too deep, only a couple of feet, and it attracts all sorts of birds and wildlife. Your mum is a keen gardener and really into the environment. She hates to waste water and has a water barrel connected to a drain from the roof of the shed. She uses the water in it to feed her flowerbeds.

RISK ASSESSMENT:

- Discuss the potential risks in the garden.
- What measures should be put in place to prevent any accidents?
- What other drowning risks can be found in a garden?
- Discuss any personal stories you have that relate to water safety in or around your home.

ABILITY ANALYSIS:

- What age groups would be most at risk in a garden like this?

FARM**RISK ASSESSMENT:**

- Have you ever seen an open slurry tank?
- What are the other potential drowning risks on a farm?
- What preventative measures should have been in place on the farm?
- What is the key difference between a farm and an ordinary garden?

ABILITY ANALYSIS:

- Did Kevin assess his ability correctly?
- Did Kevin's brother put himself at risk?
- Was there a safer way to rescue him?