



# VACATION WATER SAFETY CHECKLIST



## BOOKING YOUR VACATION

### ○ IDENTIFY YOUR DESTINATION

- What water features are present at the hotel or vacation rental you are considering?
- What existing 5 Layers of Protection are present around the water such as fences, alarms, and rescue equipment?
- Does the property management or host provide a demonstration and water safety information specific to their property?
- What is the expected weather forecast during your vacation?
- Is there any current water borne recreational water illnesses present the area you will be vacationing (red tide, fresh water amoebas, E. coli O157, etc.)?
- Is there any current marine life migration around this time of year (jellyfish, sharks, whales, etc.)?

### ○ WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Do water features on the property have barriers such as fencing?
- Are there alarms on the doors with direct access to water features?
- Do they have any water safety plans (rental houses) or an emergency response plan (hotels)?
- Are there lifeguards present at the location I'm staying or at a near by location?

### ○ WHAT TO ASK

- What water rescue (reaching or throwing) devices are available?
- Are there storage bins for pool toys?
- Do they have readily available first aid and other emergency prep supplies on hand?
- Is 911 or local emergency information posted and readily available?
- What are the local water safety regulations regarding open water? Where can you find more information on life jacket usage requirements, beach hours, if water conditions will be posted, and any boating ordinances (if applicable)?

## PREPARATION & PACKING

- Sign up for swimming lessons prior to vacation.
- Have a vacation water safety discussion with your family.
- Pack a Water-Watcher card and use it actively when around the water.
- Wear brightly colored swimsuits and gear.
- Pack only USCG-approved flotation devices.
- Refresh your CPR and first aid skills and enroll in a basic water rescue course.
- Pack a First Aid Kit & CPR Mask.
- There are portable door alarms and body alarms that can be purchased and packed to provide an additional layer of protection.  
(\*not a substitution for supervision)



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### ARRIVAL AT YOUR DESTINATION

#### ACTION STEPS WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

- Check for all surrounding water features.
- Examine water features for areas that may be hidden from direct view.
- Identify and review all safety signage, take note of any areas that might be unavailable for usage.
- Assess if all barriers, including self closing, self latching gates are functioning and in good working order.
- Identify local emergency number and ensure it is posted along with the address at the hotel or rental property.
- Review with family members how to call 911 from a hotel phone or what the emergency number is if you are traveling outside of the US.
- Review all water safety information with your family and be sure to point out special features before the fun begins.
- Be sure to practice the 5 Layers of Protection and ensure that you use touch supervision when non-swimmers are in and around the water.
- Remember that 70% of toddler drownings happen during non-swim times so ensure that the pool is secure after you are done swimming for the day.

#### WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Is the water feature regularly maintained and tested?
- Are pools and spas covered with a pool safety cover during non-swim times?
- Are there any alarms in place? Do you know how to operate them?
- Are all access points to pools and other bodies of water gated and locked?
- Are life jackets available (if applicable)?
- Are lifeguards available?  
If so, still practice using a Water-Watcher and use touch supervision for children.
- Are there designated swim hours?
- Are all gates self-closing and self-latching?



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### DURING YOUR VACATION

#### BEST PRACTICES

- Practice ALL 5 Layers of Protection!
- Review your family water safety plan.
- Practice active and constant supervision. Use touch supervision when non-swimmers are in and around the
- Ensure that pools are latched and secured after you are done swimming for the day.
- Find 911 or local emergency information and ensure it is posted with the address near phones or in a prominent place.
- Wear USCG-approved life jackets when around and in open water.
- Use a buddy or group system.
- Take breaks every hour (bathroom breaks and to replenish energy).
- Teach children to swim near lifeguards and choose lifeguarded beaches when possible.
- Check the weather and water conditions before going into open water.
- Know the local beach flag system.