



# News Release

**Sunrise Fire-Rescue Department**  
(954) 746-3400 [www.sunrisefl.gov](http://www.sunrisefl.gov)  
For Release: IMMEDIATE

## Practice Water Safety Year-Round!

(SUNRISE, FL)- As cool weather once again becomes a distant memory, Floridians everywhere will be ramping up their activities in and around the water. It is the ideal time to build water-safe habits with your family – habits to be practiced year-round.

Broward County has 128,830 swimming pools, with over 5,200 of them being within the City of Sunrise. Broward also has 23 miles of coastal beaches, 165 miles of intra-coastal waterways, countless ponds, lakes, spas, above-ground and portable pools. This water-logged landscape demands our constant vigilance – particularly where children are concerned.

In Broward, drowning is the leading cause of death in children before the age of four. While the importance of teaching children to swim cannot be overstated, most children who fall victim to drowning *were never intended to be in the water*. Instead, they wander away from a distracted caretaker and into an unsupervised area with water. Thus, parents must continually employ **multiple layers of protection**, including:

- **Supervision** - Always have a designated, responsible adult whose undivided attention is on the children – not only when swimming, but whenever access to water is a possibility. Children must be taught from an early age never to go near the water without an adult.
- **Barriers** – Use child-proof locks on all doors, door alarms, pool fences, and self-closing and self-latching gates.
- **Preparation** - Learn CPR and keep proper safety gear, including a phone, life-vests, hook, & ring buoy, near the pool. If a child is missing, always check the pool first.
- **Swimming and Water Safety Lessons** – Even the youngest children can learn skills to help them to be safer in and around the water. Caregivers should learn to swim as well.

Luckily, there are now numerous, inexpensive options for swimming and water-safety lessons. The City of Sunrise offers free and low-cost swim lessons to residents; visit [www.sunrisefl.gov](http://www.sunrisefl.gov) or call 954-747-4600 for more information. Free swim lessons are also available through the YMCA of Broward County SPLASH program; visit [www.ymcabroward.org](http://www.ymcabroward.org) or call 954-334-9622. Additionally, Broward County's SWIM Central program offers \$40 vouchers towards swim lessons for children four years of age and under. Go to [www.watersmartbroward.org](http://www.watersmartbroward.org) to request a voucher, where you will also find a wealth of information and resources for all things related to water-safety.

Please remember that while swimming lessons are an essential part of drowning prevention, there is no substitute for active adult supervision - *especially* for small children.

“Drowning is almost always preventable,” said Sunrise Fire Chief Thomas DiBernardo. “The key is to teach parents to use multiple layers of protection where water is concerned.”

For more information and safety tips, visit the City of Sunrise website at [www.sunrisefl.gov](http://www.sunrisefl.gov), ‘Like’ us on Facebook at Sunrise-Rescue, and follow us on Twitter@SunriseFRD.

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