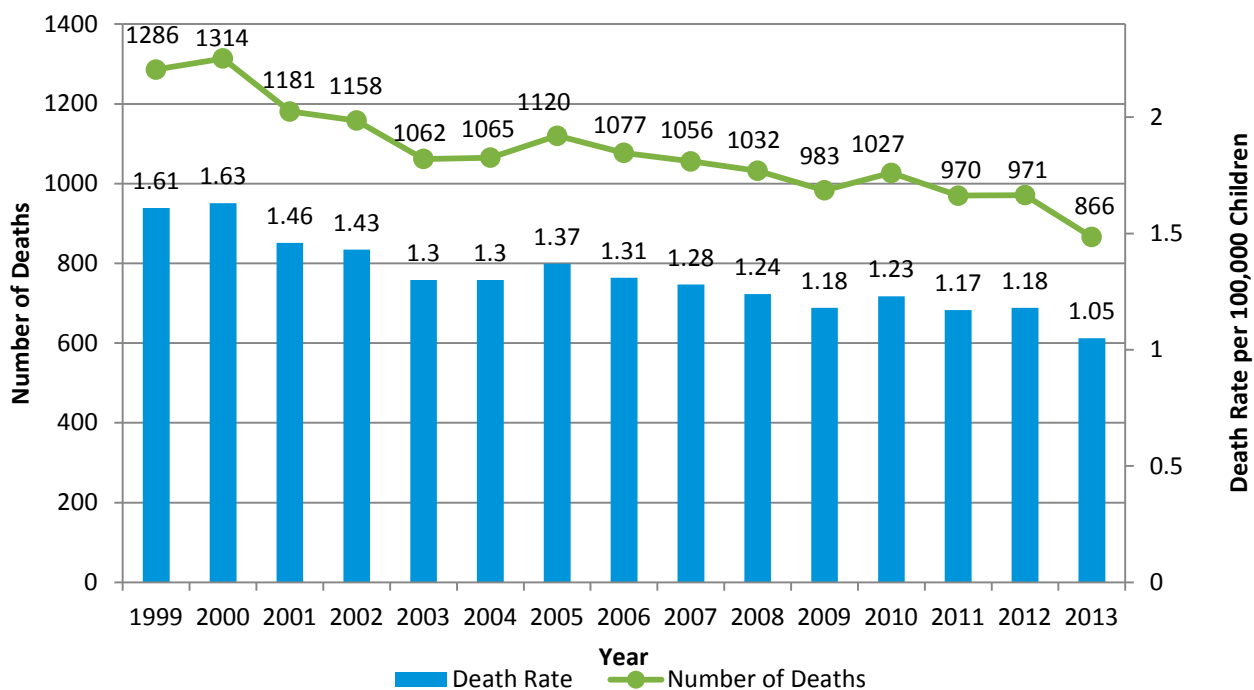


## Swimming and Boating Safety Fact Sheet (2015)

### Fatalities

- 866 children ages 19 and under drowned in 2013.<sup>1</sup>
  - 48% of children (416) who drowned were ages 4 and under.<sup>1</sup>
  - 76% of children (654) who drowned were boys.<sup>1</sup>

**1999-2013 Drowning Fatalities and Death Rate Among Children Ages 19 and Under**



*Death Rate per 100,000 Children*

### Injuries

- 4,197 children ages 19 and under were seen in emergency rooms for injuries from near-drowning in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

### Additional Statistics

- Swimming pools are the most common site for a drowning to occur among children ages 4 and under.<sup>2</sup>
- About three-quarters of pool submersion deaths occur at a home.<sup>3</sup>
- The majority of infant (less than 1 year old) drowning deaths happen in bathtubs or large buckets.<sup>4</sup>



- African-American children have the highest rate of drowning fatalities (1.61 per 100,000), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (0.98 per 100,000). The rate of drowning fatalities among African-American children ages 5-14 years old is 2.8 times greater than the rate among white children.<sup>1</sup>
- The use of specially-made drain covers, safety vacuum-release systems, multiple filter pumps and other pressure-venting pool filter mechanisms can reduce the risk of entrapment.<sup>4</sup>
- According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an average of 12 children under age 10 died in inflatable pools each year from 2003-2005. Because of their flexible and low sides, it may be easier for a child to climb inside of an inflatable pool.<sup>5,6</sup>
- In 2013, 77% of all fatal boating accident victims drowned, and of those who drowned, 84% were not wearing a life jacket.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2013, 22 children ages 12 and under died while boating. Eight of these children died from drowning, and five of those children were not wearing a life jacket as required by state and federal law.<sup>7</sup>
- 20% of boating deaths of all ages occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction in 2013.<sup>7</sup>
- The U.S. Coast Guard requires that all children under age 13 wear a personal flotation device while on a recreational vessel.<sup>8</sup> Forty-eight states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have some form of legislation that requires children to wear PFDs.<sup>9</sup>
- It is estimated that half of all drowning events among recreational boaters from 2000 to 2006 could have been prevented if personal flotation devices were worn.<sup>10</sup>

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drowning—United States, 2005-2009. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. May 18, 2012. 61(19):344-347.
- <sup>3</sup> Gipson K. Pool or spa submersion: estimated injuries and reported fatalities, 2012 report. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Consumer Project Safety Commission; 2012.
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- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Portable Pools. Available from: <http://www.cpsc.gov/Regulations-Laws--Standards/Voluntary-Standards/Topics/Portable-Pools/>. Accessed November 3, 2014.
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- <sup>7</sup> United States Coast Guard, United States Department of Homeland Security. Recreational boating statistics 2013. Washington, DC: United States Coast Guard; 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> Environmental Protection Agency. Wearing of personal flotation devices (PFDs) by certain children aboard recreational vessels. Federal Register Environmental Documents, February 27, 2002: 67(39).
- <sup>9</sup> Hart CA. Testimony of Honorable Christopher A. Hart, Vice Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, Before the Environmental Matters Committee, Maryland House, In Support of Senate Bill 92, Amending Personal Floatation Device Requirements for Children. Annapolis, M.D., April 7, 2010. National Transportation Safety Board Website. Available from: <https://www.nts.gov/news/speeches/hart/hac100407.html>. Accessed November 3, 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> Cummings P, Mueller BA, Quan L. Association between wearing a personal floatation device and death by drowning among recreational boaters: a matched cohort analysis of United States Coast Guard data. *Inj Prev*. 2011; 17: 156-159.

Last updated February 2015. If you have a question about this factsheet, please call 202-662-0600.

