

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Water Safety, Swim Lessons Urged to Keep Riverside County Residents Safe This Summer

**RIVERSIDE, CA (May 21, 2025)** – With the days getting warmer and summer just around the corner, now is the perfect time to sign up for swim lessons and brush up on water safety tips to keep kids and adults safe whenever in or near water.

The reminder comes as pools, lakes and beaches are expected to be busy with residents stepping out and jumping into summer during the Memorial Day holiday. Pools, natural water sources and even tubs and water-filled buckets pose a serious danger for drowning if children or adults are not properly monitored.

“We always need to be aware of each other around water, especially our kids. Drownings can happen in an instant so we must ensure our children and grandchildren take survival swim lessons and learn the rules around the pool,” said Riverside County Third District Supervisor and First 5 Commission Chair Chuck Washington. “We encourage families to enroll their children in survival swim lessons, which teach them how to self-rescue in case of accidental immersion in the water.”

Children require constant supervision when in or near a body of water. In the event that children accidentally fall into a body of water, having completed swimming lessons helps increase their water safety.

First 5 Riverside County (F5RC) provides swimming lessons for children aged 6 months to 5 years for eligible families through partnering agencies across the county. These include one-on-one survival and group swimming lessons.

Additional preventive actions include:

- Assign a water watcher whenever people are close to water and never allow someone to swim alone.
- Avoid consuming alcohol and medications that can influence judgment, balance and the ability to swim.
- Get trained in CPR, basic first aid and rescue methods.
- Enroll children in swim lessons with a certified instructor.
- Wear life jackets when on or near natural water sources.

Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) advises adding barriers around pools.

“The fencing should be secure, non-climbable, and should not have any gaps or openings greater than 4 inches. All gates leading into a [pool enclosure must be self-closing and self-latching](#) to prevent unsupervised access by a child,” said Jenay Marcotte, Program Chief, DEH.

Because drowning doesn’t take a holiday, residents are urged to also be mindful of these layers of protection at home and when vacationing at a hotel or at a vacation rental.

Recent [findings](#) by Riverside University Health System -- Public Health indicate that drownings were the leading cause of death in children 1-4 years of age in Riverside County between 2018 and 2022. During the same period, there were 866 water-related accidents in Riverside County and children aged 0-4 made up 64% of those incidents.

"Drowning is 100 percent preventable. That is the good news. We must always be aware of our surroundings, and watchful of others when near a water source. The consequences of failing this vital function as a friend, family member or parent are devastating," said Kim Saruwatari, Director, Riverside University Health System – Public Health.

For additional safety tips and resources, visit [rivcowatersafety.org](http://rivcowatersafety.org).

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#### **About the Riverside County Water Safety Coalition**

*The Riverside County Water Safety Coalition is a collaborative made up of Riverside University Health System - Medical Center, Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, Riverside County Department of Environmental Health, CAL FIRE / Riverside County Fire Department, First 5 Riverside and Riverside University Health System - Public Health to promote water safety and drowning prevention.*