

## FACT SHEET 01:

# WHAT IS A PORTABLE SWIMMING POOL?

australian consumer law

# #MakeItSafe



### Q. What are portable swimming pools?

A. Portable swimming pools take several forms and include inflatable pools, pools incorporating a canvas or flexible plastic liner attached to a frame, and hard plastic pools such as wading pools. Depths vary from less than 150mm to over one metre.

### Q. What are the different names they go by?

A. Portable pools may also be advertised as wading pools, paddling pools, inflatable pools and kiddie pools.

### Q. What should I look for when purchasing a portable pool?

A. The Australian Consumer Law requires portable pools and their retail packaging to be labelled with warnings drawing attention to drowning hazards and local fencing laws. This is enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and State and Territory regulators.

### Q. Why are they dangerous?

A. Portable pools pose a serious drowning risk to small children. Even with very little water, it only takes seconds for a child to drown in a portable pool. They also present a risk because owners are generally not aware of the need in most States and Territories to fence a portable pool that is 300mm deep or more. Children have also drowned in portable pools that have not been emptied and put away after use.

### Q. Why do young children drown in portable swimming pools?

A. Young children are at risk of drowning in portable pools for a number of reasons. Young children are naturally fascinated by water and are top heavy so when they lean over to look into water or reach for an object they can easily topple over and drown in just a few centimetres of water. Young children are unable to understand the concept of danger and may have difficulty in understanding that water could cause them harm. Childhood drowning is a silent event as children generally do not cry out for help.

## PORTABLE POOLS SAFETY CHECKLIST:

- Check with your local council for fencing requirements.
- Make sure you always actively supervise children within arms' reach whenever they are in or around the water.
- Never rely on older children to supervise younger children, no matter how confident you are in their ability.
- For smaller pools ensure they are emptied and put away after use.
- When not in use, store the pool securely out of reach of young children.
- Ensure the pool cannot fill with rain water or water from sprinklers.
- Don't exceed the number of adults or children the pool can safely hold.

Take Simple Steps to  
**#MakeItSafe**

## REAL LIFE STORY:

### Portable Pool Drowning Death

A two year old girl drowned in a portable pool in the backyard of her house. The girl found her way back into the wading pool after having played in it earlier in the day. Her death follows three similar incidents over the summer.

Royal Life Saving and consumer affairs agencies across Australia are urging parents to always actively supervise children of all ages when using portable pools and deflate them and store them securely, out of reach of children when not in use.

For further information  
contact Royal Life Saving on  
**1300 737 763** or visit  
**royallifesaving.com.au/makeitsafe**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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Commonwealth, State and Territory  
consumer affairs regulators

