

MEDIA RELEASE

June 5, 2024

Save a Life - Become a Water Watcher!

Temperatures are rising and many Kern County families try to beat the heat with backyard swimming parties and taking trips to the beach and other recreational bodies of water. When in and around water, children must **always** be kept in sight of a responsible adult. Drownings can happen quickly and silently, so there is no room for error.

Designate a [Water Watcher](#) to supervise children during water activities. This Water Watcher wears a lanyard that can rotate between adults to ensure that someone is always focused on the children. That means not engaging in conversations with others, texting, watching videos or reading a book. Pick up your free Water Watcher lanyard at Public Health located at 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue in Bakersfield.

Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children ages one to four. In 2022, the [Kern County Child Death Review Team](#) (CDRT) reported six drownings in children under the age of eighteen. From 2018 to 2022, twenty-one children died from drowning in Kern County. Of these, three were in the Kern River, three in bathtubs and 15 in pools. It was determined that 100% of the pool- and tub-related drownings had a lapse in supervision. These consisted of a lapse of adult supervision while the child was in a pool or tub or in the home that had easy access to the pool.

There are steps we all can take to prevent drownings in and around our homes:

LOOK:

- Never leave children unattended, especially near water.
- Children who cannot swim should remain within your reach.
- Keep a phone near you – to call 911 if there is an emergency.

LOCK:

- Put a fence around all sides of a pool or spa with a self-closing and latching gate.
- Have alarms on doors and pool gates.

LEARN:

- Adults and children should learn how to swim.
- Teach your child to always swim with a buddy.
- Use life jackets and avoid using air filled toys as floatation devices.

Kern County Public Health has embarked on a year-long health initiative we call “A Healthier Kern – One Heart at a Time.” This initiative highlights ten health-related challenges and provides awareness and education to empower our residents to be healthier while showcasing Public Health programs and services. Learn more by visiting our website <https://kernpublichealth.com/healthierkern/>.

###

*Grounded in Health*1800 Mt. Vernon Ave., Bakersfield, CA. 93306 | 661.321.3000 | www.kernpublichealth.com