



# Drowning Prevention Pilot Project

## Project Data, 2015-2016

Drowning is the leading cause of injury deaths in children ages 1-4 in Ohio; it is the third leading cause of injury deaths in children ages 5-9 and 10-14. Survivors of severe drowning incidents can experience long-term disabilities including memory problems, learning deficiencies, and loss of basic cognitive functioning. Ohio does not currently collect detailed information on public swimming pool-related injuries or deaths. Recognizing the usefulness of these details for preventing drowning incidents, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) initiated a Drowning Prevention Pilot Project to (1) better understand the circumstances surrounding these incidents, and (2) inform data-driven revision of public swimming pool rules. To gather these data, ODH developed the Public Pool and Spa Injury Incident Report Form based on Model Aquatic Health Code guidelines and other states' data collection practices, and piloted it with 23 local health districts (LHDs) during the 2015 outdoor swim season. The program was continued in 2016, expanding to 32 LHDs. Below represent select provisional project data from 2015 – 2016.

### 2015

---

- ODH received 83 reports for incidents occurring between 12MAY2015 and 27SEP2015
- Reports were received from 9 of 23 participating LHDs
- Incidents were documented at 17 facilities
- Age of Victim (n = 81)
  - Mean: 9.5 years
  - Range: 2 – 45 years
  - 12.4% 4 years or less
  - 76.5% 10 years or less
- Location of Incident
  - Facility
    - 67 (80.6%) Outdoor
    - 12 (14.4%) Indoor
    - 4 (4.8%) Not Specified
  - 20 (24.1%) Main Pool
  - 20 (24.1%) Diving Board
  - 14 (16.9%) Slide
  - 4 (4.8%) Zero Entry Pool
  - 1 (1.2%) Spray Ground/Splash Pad
  - 1 (1.2%) Wading Pool
  - 6 (7.2%) Other
  - 17 (20.5%) Not Specified
- Depth of Pool (n = 74)
  - Median: 4 feet
  - Range: 0 – 13 feet
- Type of Incident
  - 45 (54.2%) Near Drowning
  - 3 (3.6%) Spinal
  - 30 (36.1%) Puncture/Cut/Scrape/Bump/Bruise
  - 4 (4.8%) Other
  - 1 (1.2%) Not Specified
- Results of Incident
  - 46 (55.4%) Water rescue
  - 1 (1.2%) Rescue breathing/resuscitation
  - 9 (10.8%) EMS call

## 2016

---

- ODH received 188 reports for incidents occurring between 22MAY2016 and 22SEP2016
- Reports were received from 14 of 32 participating LHDs
- Incidents were documented at 24 facilities
  - 16 Govt/City Pool
  - 4 Private Club
  - 2 Apartment/Condo
  - 1 Hotel/Motel
  - 1 School
  - 69 (36.7%) from one facility
  - 129 (68.6%) reports received from four facilities
- Age of Victim (n = 183)
  - Mean: 10.3 years
  - Range: 1 – 75 years
  - 17.0% 4 years or less
  - 74.5% 10 years or less
- Location of Incident
  - Facility
    - 107 (56.9%) Outdoor
    - 7 (3.7%) Indoor
    - 74 (39.4%) Not specified
  - 35 (18.6%) Main Pool
  - 38 (20.2%) Diving Board
  - 35 (18.6%) Slide
  - 8 (4.3%) Zero Entry Pool
  - 5 (2.7%) Spray Ground/Splash Pad
  - 1 (0.5%) Wading Pool
  - 12 (6.4%) Other
  - 54 (28.7%) Not Specified
- Depth of Pool (n = 165)
  - Median: 4 feet
  - Range: 0 – 13 feet
- Type of Incident
  - 3 (1.6%) Suffocation/Drowning
  - 100 (53.2%) Near Drowning
  - 4 (2.1%) Spinal
  - 6 (3.2%) Dislocation/Sprain
  - 60 (31.9%) Puncture/Cut/Scrape/Bump/Bruise
  - 13 (6.9%) Other
  - 2 (1.1%) Not specified
- Results of Incident
  - 111 (59.0%) Water rescues
  - 3 (1.6%) Rescue breathings/resuscitations
  - 11 (5.9%) EMS calls
  - 12 (6.4%) Transports to medical facility

**Sean-Paul A. Claypool, MPH**  
CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellow  
Ohio Department of Health  
[Sean-Paul.Claypool@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Sean-Paul.Claypool@odh.ohio.gov)  
(614) 752-4489

**Mary Clifton, RS, MA**  
Recreation Programs Administrator  
Ohio Department of Health  
[Mary.Clifton@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Mary.Clifton@odh.ohio.gov)  
(614) 466-6736