



In the five years (2015-2019) 23 (6%) of the 408 preventable drowning fatalities within New Zealand were aged under five. Most children aged **0-4 years of age** who drown do so around the home environment with almost half (43%, n=10) in home pools. An emerging trend is an increase in drownings in environments close to the home. Under 5 drowning fatalities (43% n=10) occurred in inland still waters (ponds, drains and farm troughs), and one each in a bath, creek and estuary. Of the ethnic groups represented in the drownings for this age group NZ European were the highest at 40% (n=9), Māori accounting for 30% (n=7), and Pacific Peoples 9% (n=2). Six drownings occurred in Auckland, most (83%, n=5) were in home pools, and one in a pond.

In the **5-14 year old** age group there were six drownings in the five year period 2015 - 2019. Two thirds (4 of the 6) were female. This is different to all other drowning data. One third (2 of the 6) were in baths, unusual for this older age group. One of the incidents involved alcohol, and only one incident occurred when the child was supervised.

## Supervision

Supervision of small children is very important especially when they are around any body of water.

Supervision means

Constant visual contact by a responsible adult

Being within arm's reach of a small children



Not being distracted by anything - a phone, reading, or talking to friends

Being able to respond immediately if needed

Small children have been known to fall headfirst into toilets, ponds and paddling pools. These accidents often happen because of a lapse in adult supervision. It is not realistic for a parent to be expected to supervise their children every minute of each day and there are many potential water hazards in the home and garden.

Young children need additional layers of protection such as providing barriers to water hazards, for example:

- Toilet lids down, and toilet, bathroom and laundry doors closed
- Bath plugs placed up high out of a child's reach
- Nappy bucket lid on and the buckets up high out of reach
- Swimming pools fenced with child resistant doors, gates, and locks, compliant with the Building (Pools) Amendment Act 2016; Section 19
- Fishponds covered with a rigid wire mesh

Farms and lifestyle blocks can have additional hazards such as

- Farm water troughs and effluent ponds
- Water holes, lakes, and reservoirs
- Creeks, canals, and rivers

