

12

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER


**Royal Life Saving**  
 ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA


FACT SHEET No.12

# Farm Water Safety



## Q. Where do toddlers commonly drown on farms?

**A.** The most common location for toddler drowning deaths on farms are dams. However, the farm environment has a range of other water locations including dams, troughs, irrigation channels, water tanks and swimming pools.

## Q. How many children drown on farms?

**A.** On average 4 children under the age of five drown in farm dams every year and there are approximately 3 hospitalisations for every drowning death.

## Q. How do I keep my child safe?

**A.** In rural areas, it is not always feasible to fence off large water bodies such as lakes or dams, so Royal Life Saving suggests parents create a Child Safe Play Area. Royal Life Saving has also developed the Keep Watch @ The Farm program which provides information and useful resources to improve parent/carer awareness of drowning prevention strategies on farms.

## Q. What is a Child Safe Play Area?

**A.** A Child Safe Play Area is a carefully planned, designated location which is securely fenced and helps to prevent a young child from entering the farm without adult supervision. Pool fencing requirements, including appropriate 'child resistant' gates and latches, can be used as a guide in planning a safe play area. For more information visit [www.keepwatch.com.au](http://www.keepwatch.com.au) for Fact Sheet No. 6 Child Safe Play Areas.

## Q. Why do parents leave their children unsupervised?

**A.** There are many reasons why a parent's attention can be diverted from their child. Busy lifestyles, phone calls, visitors, preparing meals and other siblings are just some of the things which demand attention. The Keep Watch program advocates for supervision to be supported by fenced Child Safe Play Areas, water awareness and resuscitation skills.

## Real Life Story - Boy Drowns in Farm Dam

A family is grieving after their toddler son drowned in a dam on their family farm. The couple's only son drowned when he wandered off from the main house and walked a kilometre to get to the dam. The father found his son, 2 hours later in the dam and dragged him to shore before starting CPR. Ambulance officers were called but the boy was unable to be resuscitated. This tragic case highlights the importance of supervision and secure Child Safe Play Areas on farms to prevent children wandering off, and terrible tragedies such as this, from occurring.

**ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.**

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**  
 or download them from: **[www.keepwatch.com.au](http://www.keepwatch.com.au)**

## Farm Water Safety Checklist:

- Children supervised whenever in, on, or around water
- Securely fenced Child Safe Play Area created close to the house or inside the home
- Unused holes filled in where water can gather such as ditches, dips and postholes
- Water storage such as wells and tanks securely covered
- Keep Watch @ The Farm 'please close the gate' sign, on child safe play area to remind people to close the gate
- People on farms such as farm workers and visitors alert to 'keep watch' for children around water



**KEEP WATCH @  
 THE FARM TO  
 PREVENT YOUR CHILD  
 FROM DROWNING**

Proudly Supported by



**Australian Government**