



A “How To” Video on Pool Chemical Safety

By the Water Quality & Health Council

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A new [report](#)¹ by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention features statistics on pool chemical incidents during the period 2003-2012. The highlights include:

- An estimated 4,247 people² per year went to emergency departments for injuries associated with pool chemicals; nearly half of these were younger than 18.
- The most frequent diagnosis was poisoning stemming from inhalation of vapors, fumes or gases.
- More than one-third of pool chemical related incidents occurred at a residence.
- Over 70 percent of incidents occurred over the summer swim season; over 40 percent of incidents occurred on a Saturday or Sunday, a time of increased pool use and decreased likelihood of a trained operator being on duty.

Chemicals are added to pools to maintain healthy conditions for swimming. Disinfectants, for example, inactivate waterborne germs that spread illnesses such as diarrhea, swimmers' ear and skin infections. Many pool chemical incidents are preventable through operator training. In an attempt to help reduce pool chemical-related incidents, the American Chemistry Council and the Chlorine Institute collaborated to produce a training video featuring guidelines and recommended practices on the safe storage and use of pool chemicals. For example, to prevent chemical inhalation injuries, the video recommends, among other tips:

- Reading and following chemical manufacturers' directions and relevant safety data sheets.
- Storing chemicals in a well-ventilated, dry and secure area, away from children and animals.
- Separating incompatible chemicals in storage.
- Never mixing acids and chlorine-based chemicals; avoiding cross-contaminating chemicals with common scoops or other equipment.
- Always adding pool chemical to water; never adding water to pool chemical.
- Using personal protective equipment such as goggles and plastic gloves when handling pool chemicals.

The video, available on [YouTube](#) and accessible to both commercial pool operators and backyard pool owners, includes safety messages based on information from the CDC.

As the pool season starts, share the video and help make a dent in pool chemical incident stats!

www.waterandhealth.org

¹ Hlavsa, M.C. et al., "Pool Chemical-Associated Health Events in Public and Residential Settings—United States, 2003-2012, and Minnesota, 2013," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 16, 2014/63(19);427-430.

² (95% Confidence Interval = 2,821-6,930)