



## **Midland Fire Department Offers Summer Water Safety Tips**

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**By Geena Martinez**

MIDLAND - Every year, thousands of people in the U.S. die from drowning and worldwide, that number is even more staggering.

The Midland Fire Department is hoping to prevent any tragedies. They held their annual water rescue training on Thursday.

"Pools are coming open, people are opening up their swimming pools around their homes. We're going on vacation, to the beaches and to the lakes, just to be aware that drowning can occur very quickly," Midland Fire Marshal, David Hickman, said.

"It's actually worldwide, a larger cause of death than motor vehicle accidents," Sudip Bose, M.D., said.

Drowning is the number one cause of accidental death for children under the age of five but they're not the only ones vulnerable.

"The young adult population, alcohol is a big culprit," Bose said. "Diving into shallow water, overestimating their swimming skills."

On Thursday, MFD prepared for these worst case scenarios.

"Whether it's a drowning, a head injury or a neck injury that our firefighters are trained to respond to that," Hickman said.

First responders said it's important to be aware of drowning myths.

Many people believe victims will yell for help but officials told NewsWest 9 that's not true; they'll be struggling to take a breath instead. Don't count on the victim to be waving their arms in the air as a sign that they're in trouble either. We're told their hands will be wading the water trying to stay afloat.

Officials said there are several steps you can take if you have a pool of your own.

"It should be latched from the inside, many kids drown in their own pools unfortunately," Bose said. "We have to think about alarming the gates."

There's also another skill that's useful whether it's a drowning or not.

"The scariest thing in the world is not knowing what to do so be prepared," Hickman said. "Learn CPR. You can start first aid immediately but knowing how to do that is very critical."

MFD said you can call Red Cross of the Permian Basin or the local American Heart Association if you're interested in learning CPR.

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