

Large buckets and young children can be a deadly combination. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has received reports of over 275 young children who have drowned in buckets since 1984. Over 30 other children have been hospitalized. Almost all of the containers were 5-gallon buckets containing liquids. Most were used for mopping floors or other household chores. Many were less than half full.

Of all buckets, the 5-gallon size presents the greatest hazard to young children because of its tall, straight sides and weight, even with just a small amount of liquid. At 14-inches high, a 5-gallon bucket is about half the height of a young child. That, combined with the stability, makes it nearly impossible

### **Prevent the potential hazard of toddler bucket drowning**

Once a parent or supervising adult is aware of the dangers presented by buckets, there are some easy steps to protect toddlers. Most of these steps apply to any water hazard, although there are some that are specific to buckets.

A supervising adult should never:

- leave a bucket containing even a small amount of liquid unattended where a child may gain access to it. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer the phone

for top-heavy infants and toddlers to free themselves when they fall into the bucket head first. A child can drown in a small amount of water.

Children are naturally curious and easily attracted to water. At the crawling and pulling up stages while learning to walk, they can quickly get into trouble. CPSC believes that bucket drownings happen when children are left momentarily unattended, crawl to a bucket, pull themselves up, and lean forward to reach for an object or play in the water.

Parents and caregivers who are using 5-gallon buckets for household chores are warned not to leave a bucket containing even a small amount of liquid unattended where a young child may gain access to it. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer a telephone.



- leave a toddler in the care of another young child, especially when in the middle of cleaning or mopping
- leave rainfall buckets on the ground or at a height that can be reached by toddlers.

A supervising adult should always:

- ensure that, after use, the bucket is emptied and stored in a place where young children cannot reach it
- keep an eye on buckets containing liquid, as toddlers can fall silently into water hazards.

### **Learn resuscitation**

The first few minutes in an emergency are vital and can be the difference between life and death. A drowning victim may require immediate resuscitation, which cannot wait for emergency services.

You should:

- Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and update your training regularly.
- Keep CPR instructions in a central part of the home, where you can easily access it.