



SAFETY SENSE SAFETY SENSE



May 2016

**SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY NATIONAL
GUARD**

FY 16, 8th Edition

71% of the earth is covered in water, how can we survive that?

One of the joys of spring/summer that the warmer temperatures bring is swimming. Whether here in South Dakota or while traveling abroad, swimming is a great way to stay in shape, enjoy the outdoors and cool off.

Many of us live on or near water, some even have a pool at home. But water, no matter how deep, fast or clear it may seem does pose a danger: Drowning.

Typically each year across the U.S., thousands of people will die in water related incidents. When investigators begin their job, usually one of two things is stated about the victims swimming ability; "I don't understand how this could happen, he/she is a good swimmer" or "I knew that water was too deep/fast for them".

Really, depth has little to do with most drownings, and speed of water is only relevant in rivers and streams. Meanwhile many drownings occur at home at public pools.

To truly understand the significance of this issue, 1 in four juvenile deaths occur in water (25%). Vehicle collisions and genetic/congenital defects are the only greater killer of children, 1-4 years.

Yet in many metropolitan areas, people refuse to put a locking fence around the family pool.

Many adults also perish to water accidents. Boating accidents involving trauma account for many of these fatalities, but the number of adults who are not good swimmers or cannot swim at all is staggering. Yet many will get on or near the water without floatation devices. This is truly an objective example of "pride goeth be-

fore a fall into, the water".

Swimming lessons are available for ALL ages. If you live on or near water, it is imperative that you learn and teach your children this critical, lifesaving skill.

And as you go near the water this season; boating, fishing, skiing or picnicking, remember: alcohol may mix with water in a glass, but alcohol in you, you in water isn't a good combination and can be a lethal cocktail.

For more information go to [Water-Swim Safety on the SOHO page of the intranet](#).

Take five minutes to learn how to save a life, especially your own.



One thing we can do as parents to keep our children safe their

Water-Swim Survival PowerPoint located at:

<http://go.usa.gov/cumGY> and click water-Swim Survival

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Lets look from a different perspective

The following is a true story, and unfortunately all too common. Kate and Ray met nearly 15 years ago. They dated and had their moments of frustration and heartache, but ultimately they wed four years into their relationship. Then came the big news: they were going to have a child. Kate worked through the pregnancy at her 9-5 Monday thru Friday job while Ray worked in construction. That meant when there was work, he made good money, but often, especially during the winter they relied on Kate's income. It also meant he did not have health and life insurance, as often that type of work is so sporadic that it was something they discussed, but, they were young and had time to figure those issues out later.

Kate had a baby girl in the winter. As time went by there were always things to do, job, work around the house, projects in and out of the home and as with most people, trying to spend quality time enjoying what they had. The baby was now four years old. Ray had some good years and Kate had solid stable employment. Their life was great, in their eyes. Ray had a truck for work, nothing extravagant, but solid reliable transportation. The radio didn't always work and sometimes the driver door didn't latch right, but overall it was all he needed. One afternoon, Kate came home from work. There had been some miscommunication about who was going to pick up their child from daycare and Kate ended up doing some back tracking.

She was a bit irritated with Ray for forgetting it was his job today to stop by the daycare center. But Rays uncle pulled into the driveway as Kate was getting to the door.. "Rays been in an accident" he yelled from his truck.

"What are you talking about?" she asked, "I just talked to him 30 minutes ago." All Rays uncle said was "we got to go, now!"

As they drove to the hospital, they passed the intersection where the accident happened. She saw Ray's truck and except for some minor damage on

the passenger side, it really didn't look the worse for ware. When she arrived at the Emergency Room and asked where Ray was, she was met with blank stares. "One moment, someone will be right out."

Kate was confused; she just wanted to see Ray, take me to my husband. Then a nurse come out and asked her to step into a small room on the side of the waiting room. "I'm sorry, Ray died" was all she said.

Kate was bewildered, she had just spoke to him, he was on his way home, we have a child he needs to be here for. "What are you talking about, his truck is barely damaged?"

As it turned out, those things that we all take for granted, took a serious toll on Kate and Ray. The accident wasn't his fault, he just happened to be driving through an intersection where another person would run a red light. Neither vehicle was traveling excessively fast; the investigation showed Ray was at 28 mph and the vehicle that struck him was under 35 mph. But that door, the driver's door that didn't always latch, it opened in the accident. Ray had a habit

of wearing his seat belt when he was on the road, out of town, but in town, it wasn't necessary.

Ray was ejected from the vehicle and struck his head on the road. He was dead before anyone could really help him. The steering wheel of his truck was bent, showing that he tried to hang on, and stay in the vehicle but the force behind the collision was stronger than one can imagine, even at low speeds.

We all have a responsibility to others (spouse, children, parents, siblings, coworkers, friends and anyone on the road) to take care of ourselves, ensure that everything operates as it should on our vehicles. We also must buckle up each time, every time, no matter how short the trip will be.

Ask her today, Kate will tell you the few dollars that would have fixed that door would have changed everything in her life and that of her daughters. Kate is now a grandmother and as she looks at her grandson, she thinks about how Ray would have been so proud. The struggles that she endured, the sleepless nights, the gallons of tears, the empty days for her and her daughter. All avoidable.



Often times the amount of damage to a vehicle does not indicate the level of injury (or lack of) that was sustained by occupants of the vehicle in a collision. Always wear your seat belt. Always ensure children are in proper restraint seats. Never take it for granted that its just down the street, I won't need a seatbelt.

Every Member Counts
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD



HERE IT COMES

are you ready to swim?



- Always swim with a buddy.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during any water activity.
- Select swimming sites that have lifeguards on duty.
- Do not use air-filled or foam toys in place of personal flotation devices - they are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

READY ... OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



ARMY STRONG:



<https://safety.army.mil>