Vacation Rental Checklist

A one-page checklist for rental homes with a pool, hot tub, lake or beach: what to ask before you book, what to check on arrival, and daily habits.

Letter page · For parents, caregivers

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Check the pool before you book. The CPSC knows of at least 64 fatal and nonfatal pool drownings of children under 15 at vacation rental homes since 2021 (Pool Safely), and rentals have no lifeguards.

Before you book, ask the host

- [ ] Is the pool or hot tub surrounded by a four-sided, non-climbable fence?
- [ ] Does the gate self-close and self-latch? Are there alarms on doors to the pool?
- [ ] Are there raised drain covers to prevent entrapment? Is there a lake, pond or dock?

When you arrive, and every day

- [ ] Test every gate, door lock and alarm before you unpack.
- [ ] Write the full address by the phone for 911, and teach it to older kids.
- [ ] Find something to reach with and something to throw; keep a phone by the pool.
- [ ] Empty and put away any wading pools, buckets or coolers.
- [ ] One named Water Watcher at every swim time, switching every 15-20 minutes. You are the lifeguard.
- [ ] Missing child? Check the water first.

What you can do today: copy the questions above into a message to your host. Then read vacation rental pool safety or try Vacation water safety check.

Sources

1. Know Before You Go: Pool Safety and Vacation Rentals, Pool Safely (CPSC). https://www.poolsafely.gov/2026/05/05/know-before-you-go-pool-safety-and-vacation-rentals/
2. Swimming Safety, American Red Cross. https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety/swim-safety.html
3. Drowning Prevention for Curious Toddlers, American Academy of Pediatrics (HealthyChildren.org). https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Water-Safety-And-Young-Children.aspx
4. Teaching Your Child How to Use 911, Nemours KidsHealth. https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/911.html

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