

General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts
Donna M. Shibley, President



GFWC Community Service Program: Civic Engagement & Outreach ~ 2020-2022
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Summer has arrived!!! Time for sun and fun... We all should practice water safety throughout the year, but especially NOW during the summer. Weekly there has been so many lives loss in the water whether it is in a pool or on the ocean. Below are some safety rules and information to follow when in, on or near the water. The information was taken from the Red Cross website. <https://www.redcross.org> Grilling safety is also included in this article and the information is from the Red Cross. Hurricane and Tornado preparedness is also featured in this article.

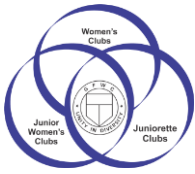


WATER SAFETY

Before going in, on or around the water, every family member should become “water smart.” This starts with learning to be safe, making good choices, and learning to swim to at least achieve the skills of water competency. Everyone should be able to enter the water, get a breath, stay afloat, change position, swim a distance, and then get out of the water safely. To help keep your family safe, the Red Cross offers these tips: Prevent unsupervised access to water. Fence pools and spas with adequate barriers and keep a constant eye for any water dangers such as portable splash pools/slides, buckets, and bathtubs.

1. **Adults should actively supervise children** and stay within arm’s reach of young children and new swimmers. Kids should follow the rules. Designate a “**water watcher**” to keep a close eye and constant attention on children and weaker swimmers in and around the water until the next water watcher takes over.
2. **Always wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket** when on a boat and if in a situation beyond someone’s skill level.
3. **Swim as a pair near a lifeguard’s chair** — everyone, including experienced swimmers, should swim with a buddy even in areas supervised by lifeguards. Always maintain constant attention and actively supervise children even when lifeguards are present.
4. Download the Red Cross [Swim app](#), sponsored by [The ZAC Foundation](#), for safety tips, kid-friendly videos and activities, and take the free [Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers](#) online course.
5. **Provide Constant Adult Supervision** — Actively supervise children and non-swimmers around the water, even when lifeguards are present. Do not just drop kids off. Avoid distracting activities such as checking email or social media.
6. **Learn to Swim** — No matter your age, learning to swim is one of the best ways to be safer in and around the water.
7. **Look for Lifeguards** — Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
8. **Swim with A Buddy** — Do not allow anyone to swim alone. Even at a public pool or a lifeguarded beach, use the buddy system.
9. **Wear A Life Jacket** — Adults and kids should always wear a **properly-fitted** U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket while boating. Non-swimmers and inexperienced swimmers should also always wear a life jacket when in and around the water. Inflatable toys can be fun but are not a substitute for U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.
10. **Learn CPR** — Learn how to prevent and respond to emergencies by learning [CPR](#).





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Secure Your Pool When Not in Use

- Completely surround your pool with four-sided isolation fencing with a self-closing and self-latching gate that is out of the reach of a child.
- A four-sided isolation fence (separating the pool area from the house and yard) reduces a child's risk of drowning 83% compared to three-sided property-line fencing.
- For above-ground pools, secure, lock or remove steps, ladders and anything that can be used for access (such as outdoor furniture and toys) whenever the pool is not being actively supervised by an adult.
- Install a secondary barrier, such as:
- Door alarms and locks that are out of the reach of a child on all doors and windows with direct access to the pool or spa area and Lockable covers.

Establish and Enforce Rules and Safe Behaviors

- Do not enter headfirst unless in a pool that has a safe diving area.
- Stay away from drains and other openings that cause suction.
- Swim with a buddy.
- Only swim when supervised by a water watcher.
- Swim sober.
- Supervise others sober and without distractions, such as reading or talking on or using a cell phone.

Take These Water Safety Steps

Employ [layers of protection](#) including barriers to prevent access to water, life jackets, and close supervision of children to prevent drowning.

[Ensure every member of your family learns to swim](#) so they at least achieve skills of water competency: able to enter the water, get a breath, stay afloat, change position, swim a distance then get out of the water safely.

Know [what to do in a water emergency](#) – including how to help someone in trouble in the water safely, call for emergency help and CPR.

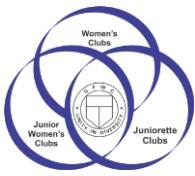
[A variety of water safety courses and resources are available to help at https://www.redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)



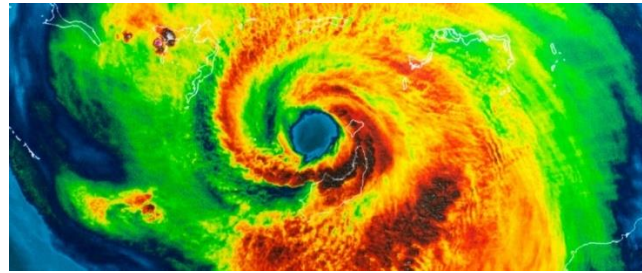
GRILLING SAFETY

Grilling food is so popular that more than three-quarters of U.S. adults have used a grill — yet, grilling sparks more than [10,000 home fires](#) on average each year. To avoid this, the Red Cross offers these grilling safety tips: <https://www.redcross.org>

1. Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use. Don't add charcoal starter fluid when coals have already been ignited.
2. Never grill indoors — not in the house, camper, tent or any enclosed area.
3. Make sure everyone, including pets, stays away from the grill.
4. Keep the grill out in the open, away from the house, deck, tree branches or anything that could catch fire.
5. Use the long-handled tools especially made for cooking on the grill to help keep the chef safe.



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Hurricane Preparedness

Right Before:

Listen to local area radio, [NOAA radio](#) or TV stations for the latest information and updates.

[Be prepared to evacuate](#) quickly and know your routes and destinations. Find a local [emergency shelter](#).

Check your [emergency kit](#) and replenish any items missing or in short supply, especially medications or other medical supplies. Keep it nearby.

Then, If You Can, Do This:

Fill plastic bottles with clean water for drinking.

Fill bathtubs and sinks with water for flushing the toilet or washing the floor or clothing.

Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation notice is issued.

Turn off propane tanks and unplug small appliances.

Bring in anything that can be picked up by the wind, such as bicycles and patio furniture.

If You Still Have Time, Do This:

Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home.

Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities to prevent damage to your home or within the community. If you shut your gas off, a professional is required to turn it back on.

Unplug small appliances to reduce potential damage from power surges that may occur.

If You Have Pets or Livestock:

Consider a precautionary evacuation of your animals, especially any large or numerous animals.

Waiting until the last minute could be fatal for them and dangerous for you.

Where possible, move livestock to higher ground. If using a horse or other trailer to evacuate your animals, move sooner rather than later.

Bring your companion animals indoors and maintain direct control of them. Be sure that your [pet emergency kit](#) is ready to go in case of evacuation.

Staying Safe During a Hurricane:

Stay indoors.

Don't walk on beaches, riverbanks or in flood waters.

Use flashlights in the dark if the power goes out. Do NOT use candles.

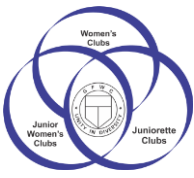
Continue listening to local area radio, [NOAA radio](#) or TV stations for the latest information and updates.

Avoid contact with floodwater. It may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.

Turn off the power and water mains if instructed to do so by local authorities.

Staying Safe Outdoors

Don't walk, swim or drive through floodwater. Just six inches of fast-flowing water can knock you over and two feet will float a car.



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If caught on a flooded road with rapidly rising waters, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground.

Don't walk on beaches or riverbanks.

Don't allow children to play in or near flood water.

Stay out of areas subject to flooding. Underpasses, dips, low spots, canyons, washes, etc. can become filled with water.

After a Hurricane:

Let friends and family know you're safe. The American Red Cross can help you [reconnect with family members](#).

If evacuated, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.

Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.

Stay alert for extended rainfall and subsequent [flooding](#).



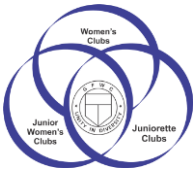
Staying Safe in a Tornado

To stay safe during a tornado, prepare a plan and an emergency kit, stay aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms, know the best places to shelter both indoors and outdoors, and always protect your head.

Tornadoes continue to impact locations across the country every year, bringing massive winds and destruction in their paths.

The 2020 tornado season claimed the lives of 76 individuals and injured hundreds more. Fifty-one percent of those victims were in a mobile home or trailer park at the time of the tornado. These storms caused billions in damage.

According to the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency \(NOAA\)external icon](#) there is no guaranteed safety during a tornado. Even the possibility of a tornado must be taken seriously. Although the most violent tornadoes can level and blow away almost any house and those within it, extremely violent EF5 tornadoes (those with wind speeds of 200MPH or more) are rare. Most tornadoes are much weaker. You can survive a tornado if you follow safety precautions. Here are three important tips to help keep you and your family safe.



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Be prepared:

The best way to stay safe during a tornado is to be prepared with the following items:

- Fresh batteries and a battery-operated TV, radio, or internet-enabled device to listen to the latest emergency weather information
- A tornado emergency plan including access to a safe shelter for yourself, your family, people with special needs, and your pets
- An [emergency kit](#) (including water, non-perishable food, and medication)
- A list of important information, including telephone numbers

Be sure your children know what a tornado is, what tornado watches and warnings are, what county or parish they live in (warnings are typically issued by county or parish), and what makes a location a safe shelter, whether at home or at school.

Stay aware of weather conditions:

To protect yourself and your family from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or an NOAA weather radio for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:

- A dark or green-colored sky
- A large, dark, low-lying cloud
- Large hail
- A loud roar that sounds like a freight train

If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV stations or to a NOAA weather radio or check the internet.

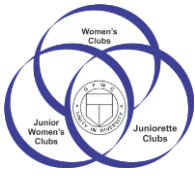
Know where to shelter:

Falling and flying debris causes most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.

- Go to the basement or an inside room without windows on the lowest floor (bathroom, closet, center hallway).
- If possible, avoid sheltering in a room with windows.
- For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
- **Do not stay in a mobile home.**

If you are outside or in a mobile home, find a nearby building preferably with a basement. If you are in a car, do not try to outrun a tornado but instead find the nearest sturdy building.

No one can know a tornado's strength before it touches down, so keep up with local weather information, especially when thunderstorms are forecast. Prepare your home and family for the possibility of a tornado. Moving to shelter quickly is easier when everyone knows where to go, whether in your home or outdoors. Following these tips will give you the best chance for staying safe in a tornado.



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What Do You Need In A Survival Kit?

At a minimum, you should have the basic supplies listed below:

- Water: one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Food: non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries (Similar item available in the Red Cross Store)
- Deluxe family first aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers (Similar item available in the Red Cross Store)
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Map(s) of the area

Consider the needs of all family members and add supplies to your kit:

- Medical supplies (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, etc.)
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, baby food, diapers)
- Games and activities for children
- **Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)**
- Two-way radios
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Manual can opener

Additional supplies to keep at home or in your survival kit based on the types of disasters common to your area:

- Whistle
- N95 or surgical masks
- Matches
- Rain gear
- Towels
- Work gloves
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Extra clothing, hat and sturdy shoes
- Plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Scissors
- Household liquid bleach
- Entertainment items
- Blankets or sleeping bags