

## ENROLL IN A SWIM COURSE

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# Water Safety

**B**Y 1910, THE RATE OF DEATH by drowning in the United States was 10.4 persons per 100,000. A former newspaper man named Wilbert E. Longfellow established the National Red Cross Life Saving Corps in 1914. The first Life Saving Station opened in Pablo Beach, Florida, and others followed. The flamboyant Longfellow, known as the *Commodore* and nicknamed *the amiable whale*, traveled the countryside with his aquatic pageants featuring swimming, water safety, and rescue techniques. The goal; for “bathers to be swimmers and swimmers to be lifesavers.”

In just a few years, the Red Cross was widely recognized as the authority on water safety. When soldiers needed training in lifesaving during World War I, it was the Red Cross that taught them. Before long, the Red Cross offered intensive training schools featuring first aid, lifesaving, and water safety for camp counselors and recreation personnel.

Much has changed in the past century, but water presents the same hazards—and with the creation of new water recreation options such as home swimming pools, water parks, and spas, bring additional worries. Yet in our hectic times, water also presents wonderful opportunities for relaxation and recreation.

In addition to first aid and



CPR training, lifeguards may learn to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) and about special hazards specific to the type of environment—waterfront, pool, water park—in which they intend to work.

Nearly four million people, most of them children, learn how to stay safe around water or how to swim each year through their local Red Cross. Our Longfellow’s Whale Tales curriculum gives teachers, parents, and other adult leaders a simple and fun way to teach young children the basics of being safe around water. In Community Water Safety, children learn how to stay out of trouble when participating in water sports, whether they are at a lake, water park, pool, or other watery places. Don’t forget our learn-to-swim classes.

## General Water Safety Tips

Obey all rules and posted signs.

Always swim with a buddy, never swim alone. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability.

Watch out for the *dangerous too’s*—too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.

Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.