

# The Local Board of Health Environmental Health Primer Injury Prevention Factsheet



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## Background

- Unintentional injury and violence accounts for approximately 30% of all years of potential lost life—the numerical difference between a predetermined end point age (typically 75) and the age at death for a death that occurred prior to that end point age.
- Examples of effective injury prevention interventions include mandatory helmet laws, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, product design changes (like crib modifications), and seat belt laws.
- Children and the elderly are at higher risk of household injury because they do not have the physical strength and/or awareness to avoid injury.
- Workplaces of potential concern for injury to a board of health might include libraries, legal offices and courthouses, road service garages, and other places where county or municipal workers are stationed.
- Injuries can occur through swimming or water activities, and programs that promote healthy swimming and boating, prevent drowning, and reduce contaminations are important ways to reduce water-related injuries.
- Recreational water illnesses are illnesses that are spread by contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers, or oceans.

## Board of Health Actions

- Monitor the rate and types of injury in a community.
- Ensure that recreational water programs include measurable objectives, enforceable regulations, an internal policies and procedures manual, properly trained staff, and sufficient resources.
- Make sure that enforceable housing codes, electrical codes, tattoo and body piercing codes, and pool and spa codes have been implemented.
- Disseminate training and educational materials about household safety and injuries at frequently visited community locations, such as recreation centers, the post office, senior centers, libraries, and doctors' offices.
- Build coalitions to distribute car seats to needy families, support car seat inspection training activities, and inspect car seats for correct installation.

## Resources for Continuing Education

- Christoffel, T., and Gallagher, S. S. (2007). *Injury Prevention and Public Health: Practical Knowledge, Skills, and Strategies*.
- Consumer Product Safety Commission. Available at [www.cpsc.gov/](http://www.cpsc.gov/)
- National Association of Local Boards of Health. (2007). *Board of Health Responsibilities in Recreational Water Programs*.
- National Institute for Occupation Safety and Health. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/>

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