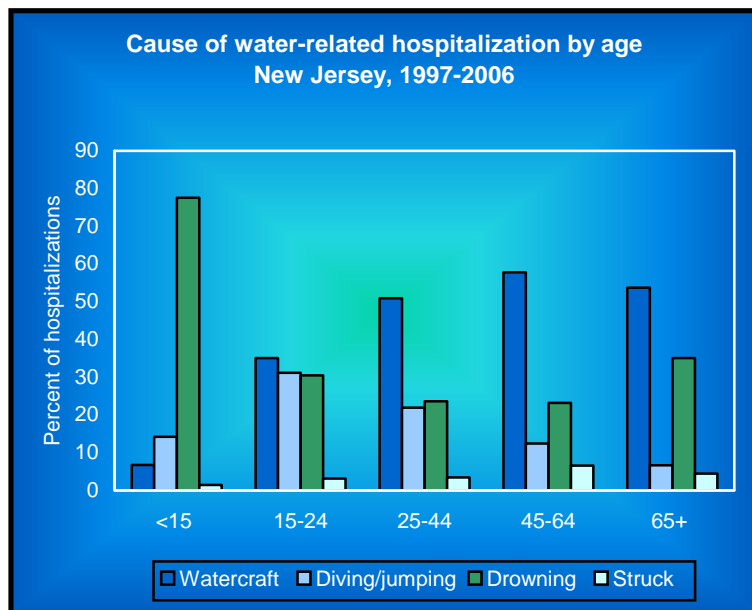


## Water Safety

- Between 1990 and 2005, over 800 people died of water-related injuries in New Jersey in the months of May through September. The water-related injury death rate decreased one-third in that time period.
- The vast majority of water-related injury deaths are due to drowning, but 13 percent are injuries involving watercraft or diving or jumping into water. 82% of deaths due to water-related injury among Whites are due to drowning compared to 97% of deaths among Blacks, 94% among Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 91% among Hispanics.
- More than 80% of water-related injury deaths are males. The death rate for Blacks is 1.8 times higher than the rate for Whites. The death rate is highest among those aged 1-4 and 15-24 years.
- Between 1997 and 2006, there were 1,700 hospitalizations for water-related injuries in the summer in New Jersey, although the numbers decreased more than 20% over the 10-year period. Hospitalization figures do not include emergency department (ED) visits.



- Unlike deaths, most hospitalizations are for watercraft accidents (40%), followed by near-drowning (39%), diving or jumping accidents (18%), and being struck by an object in the water (3%).
- Nearly 70% of those hospitalized are male. The hospitalization rate is highest among those under age 25.
- 45% of hospitalizations for water-related injuries among Whites are for watercraft accidents, 32% for near-drowning, and 19% for jumping and diving accidents. Among Blacks, 72% of hospitalizations for water-related injuries are for near-drowning, 14% for watercraft accidents, and 12% for jumping or diving.
- In the summers of 2004-2006, there were nearly 2,200 ED visits for water-related injuries. Like hospitalizations, most visits were for watercraft accidents (35%), followed by near-drowning (31%), diving or jumping accidents (25%), and being struck by an object in the water (9%).
- Two-thirds of ED visits were made by males and the ED visit rate was highest among those under 25 years of age.
- The ED visit rate was three to four times higher among Whites than among Blacks or Hispanics. Among Whites, 38% of ED visits were for injuries related to watercraft accidents, 29% for near-drowning, and 24% for jumping and diving accidents. Half of ED visits among Blacks were for near-drowning, one-third

for jumping or diving, and 10% for watercraft accidents. Among Hispanics, 36% of visits were for jumping or diving, 32% for near-drowning, and 24% for watercraft accidents.

- 💧 The best prevention against drowning is to learn how to swim. All adults and children over age 3 should enroll in swimming classes.
- 💧 Never swim alone or in unsupervised areas. Teach children to always swim with a buddy.
- 💧 If you own a pool, New Jersey regulations require that you completely enclose it with a fence with self-closing and self-latching gates. Also, have a telephone nearby to call 911 if necessary and learn CPR. Store pool chemicals in a locked area out of reach of children.
- 💧 Check water depth before entering. A minimum depth of 5 feet is recommended for diving.
- 💧 Stop swimming if you are tired, cold, far from safety, have had too much sun, or have overexerted yourself. Do not swim if you have consumed alcohol.
- 💧 In open water, know the day's weather forecast, swim only in designated areas, be cautious even when lifeguards are present, watch for dangerous waves and rip currents, and always use life jackets when boating.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: [www.nj.gov/health/chs](http://www.nj.gov/health/chs)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' public recreational bathing regulations:  
[www.nj.gov/health/eoh/phss/recbathing.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/phss/recbathing.pdf)

Drowning prevention tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm)

Water safety tips from the American Red Cross:  
[www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html)

United States Lifesaving Association web site: [www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org)

#### Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, [Center for Health Statistics](#):  
New Jersey 1990-2005 Multiple Cause of Death files  
New Jersey 1997-2006 Uniform Billing hospitalization files  
New Jersey 2004-2006 Emergency Department files

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Consumer and Environmental Health Services:  
[Public Recreational Bathing](#)

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control:  
[Drowning Prevention](#)

American Red Cross, Health and Safety Tips:  
[Water Safety Tips](#)



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