
“Care for Safety” Campaign

Drowning prevention and more

Text: Françoise Ohayon Photography: Adel Ibrahim

Swimming instructors will continue to jump to the rescue of unattended children in distress, but such incidents could be avoided altogether by proper supervision and training. This observation was at the root of the “Care for Safety” risk awareness and accident prevention campaign.

Freds Swim Academy offers swimming classes for people of all ages and proficiency levels, and the lessons for toddlers and children are particularly popular. Lessons at The Club House, Moevenpick, and Sheraton are open to residents, visitors, and the community at large, and teaching can also be organized in private villa pools. Over the years, Freds swimming instructors have had plenty of opportunities to watch how children and their parents behave around pools, and these observations were not reassuring.

“Many parents are not aware of the risks for kids in or around water,” said Denise Ashour Hiltbrunner, from Switzerland. Her English colleague Christina McIntosh agreed, saying, “We have to intervene almost daily in choking incidents in hotel pools.”

Parents tend to overestimate their children’s skills by thinking that they can swim “a little bit,” or they leave younger kids under the supervision of an older sibling thinking that it is a safe option. But children are not the only ones at risk, as incidents also happen with adults floating on mattresses that are taken away from shore by winds or tides.

The decline in number of visitors that followed the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 left Freds Swim Academy Owner Sandy Weder El Sammra and her team with time on their hands, which they put to good use by developing a series of awareness campaigns under the banner “Care for Safety.” They first concentrated on information related to risks of drowning and then expanded to include healthy nutrition, risks for children at home, relaxation for expectant mothers, and medical first aid. Several forums are open to all, not only parents of Freds pupils, and are held free of charge.

Accident prevention starts with understanding basic facts: an infant falling face down can drown in only five centimeters of water. Small children get disoriented under water and go down quietly; they don’t panic or fight but sink in what is known as “silent drowning”. Parents reading a book on their sun beds are often too far away to intervene if something happens to their kids playing in shallow water. A toddler should be kept at arm’s length at all times around water.





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Older children may seem at ease in the water, but one must differentiate paddling and floating about from safe swimming, as an unintentional gulp of water can cause a panic attack and lead to an accident. Only a child who is able to swim 25 meters using a proper technique and can stay above the water for one minute using leg movements only should be considered a safe swimmer. Safe swimmers know how to swim without overexertion, use better breathing techniques, and are aware of potential risks. Children should also be taught to never dunk or push someone under the water as it may cause them to panic, swallow water, and even hit their head against the wall in the pool.

The organization also teaches the medical first aid course that leads to the Emergency First Responder certification, which is also delivered to divers by PADI through most dive centers. Primary Care teaches participants how to respond to life-threatening emergencies and includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Secondary Care covers injuries or illnesses that are not immediately life threatening and teaches how to deal with minor and major accidents like nosebleeds; cuts and grazes; burns by fire, hot fluids, steam, sun, and jellyfish stings; and poisoning by liquids, medicines, food, and plants. Care for Children teaches participants how to provide emergency care for injured or ill children ages one to eight as well as infants under one year old, and how these emergencies may differ from adult conditions.

Swimming instructors passionate about kids' safety have given a considerable amount of time to this project. It will now be taken to the next level with the hiring of a Care for Safety messenger who will visit nurseries and schools to spread awareness of water-related risk and to further an accident prevention campaign. Care for Safety reference documents are scheduled to be published on a dedicated website and will eventually be available in English, German, and Arabic. //

The dedicated Care for Safety website will be launched soon at <http://care-for-safety.freds-egypt.com/>

Visit the EFR official website at www.emergencyfirstresponse.com



Home safety equipment

The Safety Turtle personal immersion alarm system is comprised of an unlimited number of Turtle wristbands linked to a base station; the alarm sounds the instant the child falls or ventures into water. It is available from Nile Water, and more home safety equipment is due to enhance their assortment soon. Bin-X chemical-free water filtration systems are also on offer; they make tap water potable by using a membrane filter that requires virtually no maintenance.

Nile Water, Hill Parking, ext 32393, +2 065 358 0280, www.nile-water.com, www.safetyturtle.com

Securing your home

One of the services provided by El Gouna's newest hygiene company QStop is to make homes ready for rental in accordance with the quality and safety standards of European rental agencies. Here are a few tips based on their guidelines:

Fire: detection and firefighting equipment should be installed and maintained by qualified professionals. Emergency procedures and escape routes should be detailed on a guest information sheet.

Children: childproofing a home includes banning open electrical cables and installing safety plugs. Access to building areas that present particular risks such as roof terraces and balconies should be prevented, or at least clearly marked. Baby cots and high chairs should conform to international safety norms.

Pool: safety information boards, "no diving" signs, and non-slip surfaces are a must.

Hygiene: *legionella*, a bacteria that can cause Legionnaires' disease, proliferates when stagnant water is left in pipes, tanks, air-conditioning units, or anywhere else, a risk that increases when units are unoccupied for a period of time. Proper hygiene and maintenance procedures must be implemented to prevent infections. Mattress cleaning helps reduce allergies caused by dust mites, fungi, and bacteria.

First aid: a box containing bandages, a disinfectant solution, cotton wool, adhesive bandages, burns ointment, eye pad, pins, scissors, and hand gloves should be available.

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