



# Injury Prevention: Unintentional Drowning

When taking a bath, a dip to cool off from the heat, or a trip to the great outdoors, we do not think about drowning. Yet drowning can happen to anyone in a matter of seconds, is often silent, and can result in a trip to the ED or even death. Practicing water safety can help us all enjoy being near water.

From 2016–2024, **484 Kentuckians unintentionally drowned.**

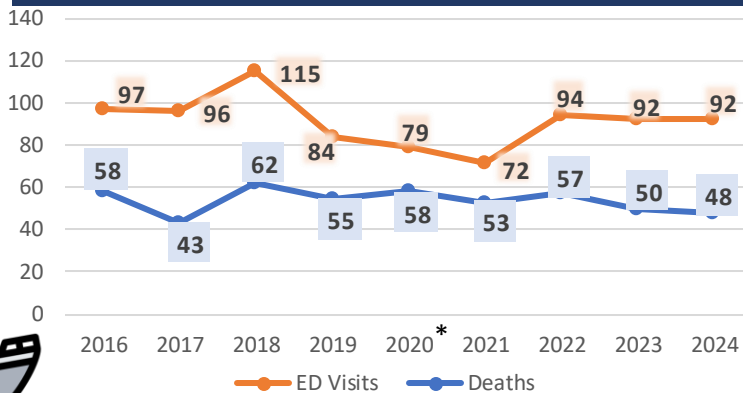
During that time, there were **821 unintentional drowning injury emergency department (ED) visits<sup>1</sup>** among Kentucky Residents.

Kentucky has **more navigable miles of water** than any other state besides Alaska.<sup>2</sup>

The median cost of an ED visit due to drowning in 2016–2024 was **\$1,636.**

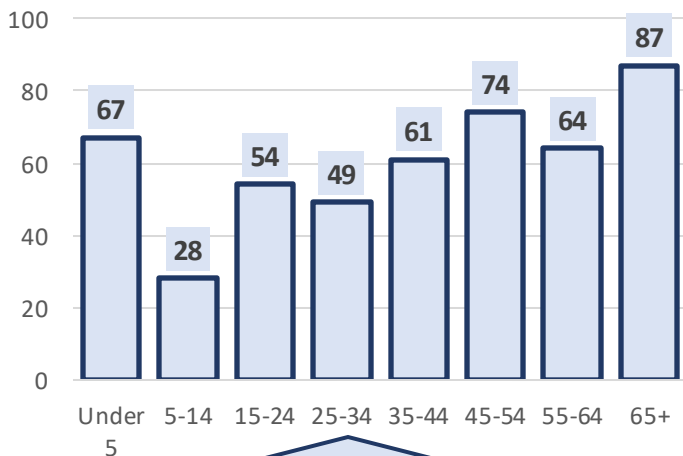


## Number of Kentucky Resident Unintentional Drowning Deaths and Injury ED Visits, 2016–2024



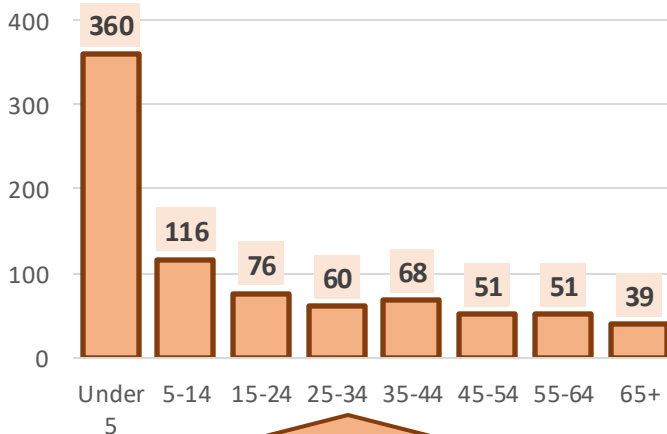
Most unintentional drowning deaths (75%) and ED visits (57%) involved **males.**

## Number of Kentucky Resident Unintentional Drowning Deaths by Age Group, 2016–2024



Most drowning deaths were among Kentuckians **aged 65 and older (18%).**

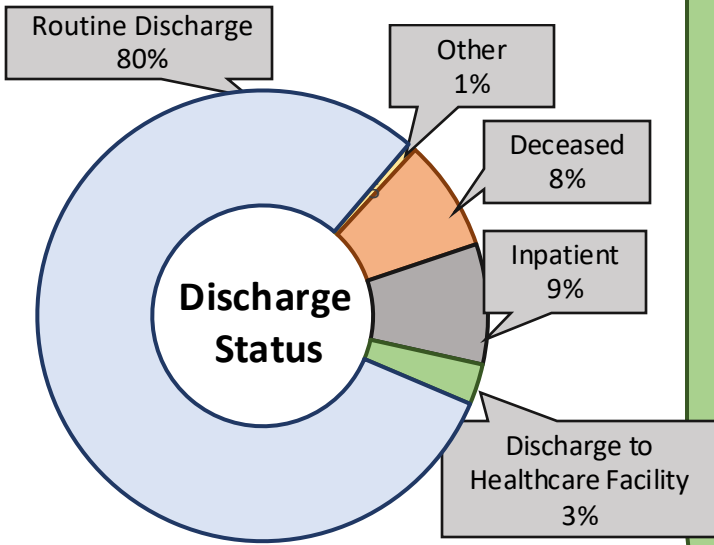
## Number of Kentucky Resident Unintentional Drowning Injury ED Visits by Age Group, 2016–2024



Most drowning ED visits occurred among persons **under the age of 5 (44%).**

<sup>1</sup>ED visits represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in Kentucky. <sup>2</sup>Kentucky Geological Survey factsheet: [https://www.uky.edu/KGS/education/factsheet/factsheet\\_water.pdf](https://www.uky.edu/KGS/education/factsheet/factsheet_water.pdf). \*The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020 should be considered when interpreting data and trend analyses. Data sources: Kentucky Outpatient Services Database, Office of Health Data and Analytics; Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. May 2026. Data are provisional and subject to change. Images: faticon.com

# Kentucky Resident Unintentional Drowning Injury ED Visits by Discharge Status and Billing Charges, 2016–2024



## Kentucky Resident Unintentional Drowning Death and Injury ED Visit Details, 2016–2024\*



### Drowning Deaths (n=484) Involved:

- 34% natural body of water
- 29% other or unspecified drowning
- 13% bathtub
- 12% watercraft/boat involvement
- 12% swimming pool

### Drowning Injury ED Visits (n=816) Involved:

- 29% watercraft/boat involvement
- 22% unintentional non-transport-related
- 20% swimming pool
- 17% falling, jumping, diving into water
- 6% bathtub
- 5% natural body of water
- 1% unknown

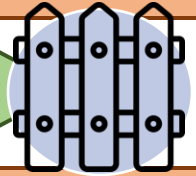
\*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Safety Tips



Learn how to be safe around water by taking water safety, rescue, and swimming lessons.

Fence off and lock your swimming pool and pond *completely*.



Use life jackets in and around lakes, ponds, rivers, and other water bodies.

Never leave kids alone and unsupervised when they are around water.



Check the weather and water conditions before you go.

## Additional Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drowning Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning>
- United States Forest Service. Know before you go: Water Safety <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-before-you-go/water-safety>
- Consumer Product Safety Commission. Stop In-Home Drowning Deaths: <https://www.cpsc.gov/safety-education/neighborhood-safety-network/toolkits/drowning-prevention>