Splish, Splash Safely

BEFORE SPRINGING INTO THE POOL THIS SEASON, KEEP SAFETY TOP OF MIND

BY HALEY SHAPLEY

A pool of one's own is a dream for many homeowners. But swimming pool ownership brings a host of responsibilities. Ensure your pool and the area around it are safe by following these precautions.

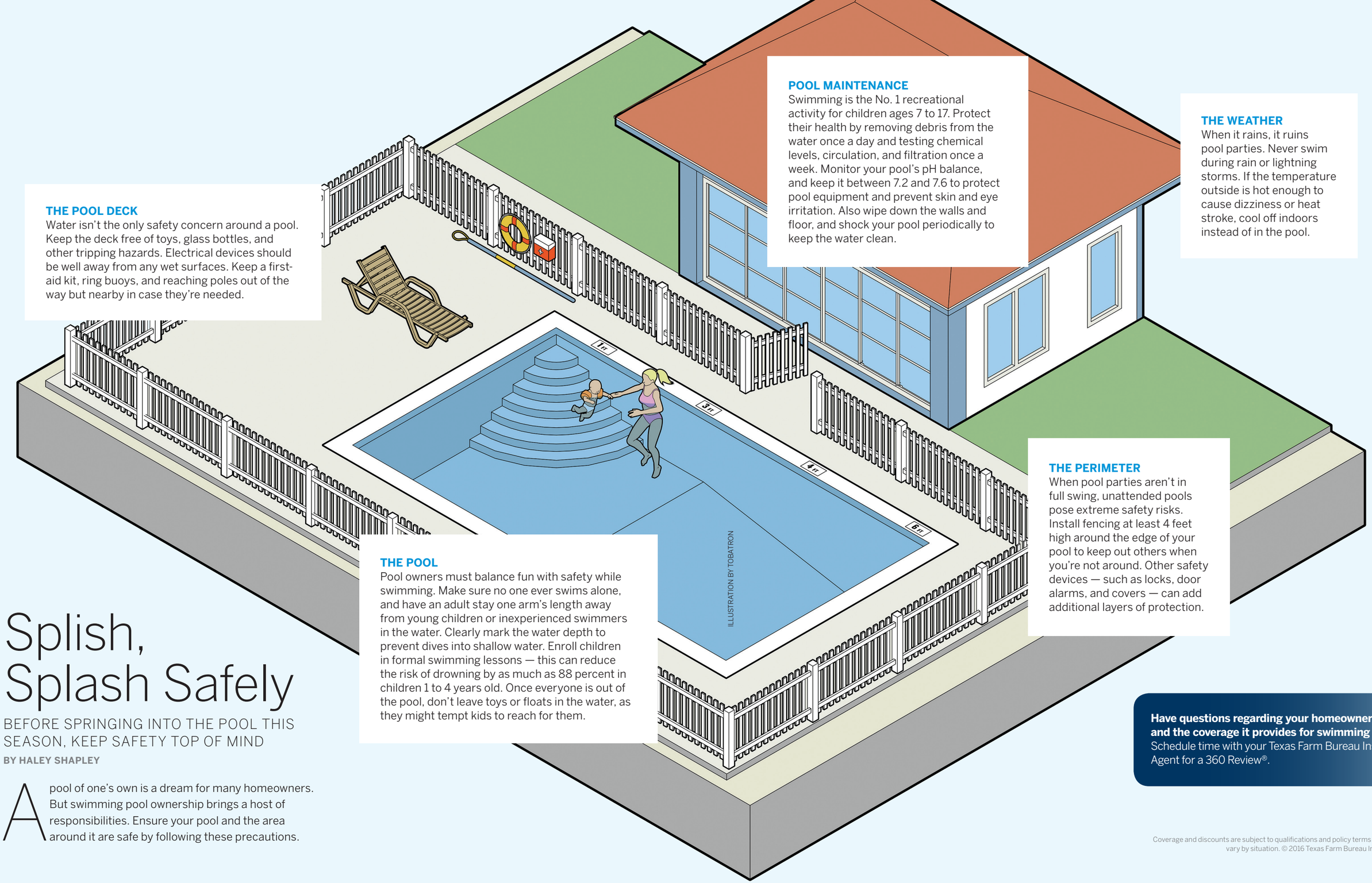

ILLUSTRATION BY TOBATRON

THE POOL DECK

Water isn't the only safety concern around a pool. Keep the deck free of toys, glass bottles, and other tripping hazards. Electrical devices should be well away from any wet surfaces. Keep a first-aid kit, ring buoys, and reaching poles out of the way but nearby in case they're needed.

POOL MAINTENANCE

Swimming is the No. 1 recreational activity for children ages 7 to 17. Protect their health by removing debris from the water once a day and testing chemical levels, circulation, and filtration once a week. Monitor your pool's pH balance, and keep it between 7.2 and 7.6 to protect pool equipment and prevent skin and eye irritation. Also wipe down the walls and floor, and shock your pool periodically to keep the water clean.

THE WEATHER

When it rains, it ruins pool parties. Never swim during rain or lightning storms. If the temperature outside is hot enough to cause dizziness or heat stroke, cool off indoors instead of in the pool.

THE POOL

Pool owners must balance fun with safety while swimming. Make sure no one ever swims alone, and have an adult stay one arm's length away from young children or inexperienced swimmers in the water. Clearly mark the water depth to prevent dives into shallow water. Enroll children in formal swimming lessons — this can reduce the risk of drowning by as much as 88 percent in children 1 to 4 years old. Once everyone is out of the pool, don't leave toys or floats in the water, as they might tempt kids to reach for them.

THE PERIMETER

When pool parties aren't in full swing, unattended pools pose extreme safety risks. Install fencing at least 4 feet high around the edge of your pool to keep out others when you're not around. Other safety devices — such as locks, door alarms, and covers — can add additional layers of protection.

Have questions regarding your homeowners policy and the coverage it provides for swimming pools? Schedule time with your Texas Farm Bureau Insurance Agent for a 360 Review®.

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