

# The french experience in safety for private family swimming pools



## Safety in private family swimming pools in France

- France has a particular experience in safety for private family swimming pools.
- A law came into force in January 2004 which obliges the owners of private pools (family and collective) to have protection systems around or in their swimming pools (barriers, covers, alarms, shelters).
- The legislator considers that the real danger in swimming pools, as in all water points, is drowning.
- The accident statistics are not high, however the Prime Minister is still concerned by this issue.

# Main duties as prescribed by this law :

- Owners have to choose a standardised prevention system to make their inground swimming pools secure.
- This was difficult to apply because all the swimming pools were concerned and not only the new ones.

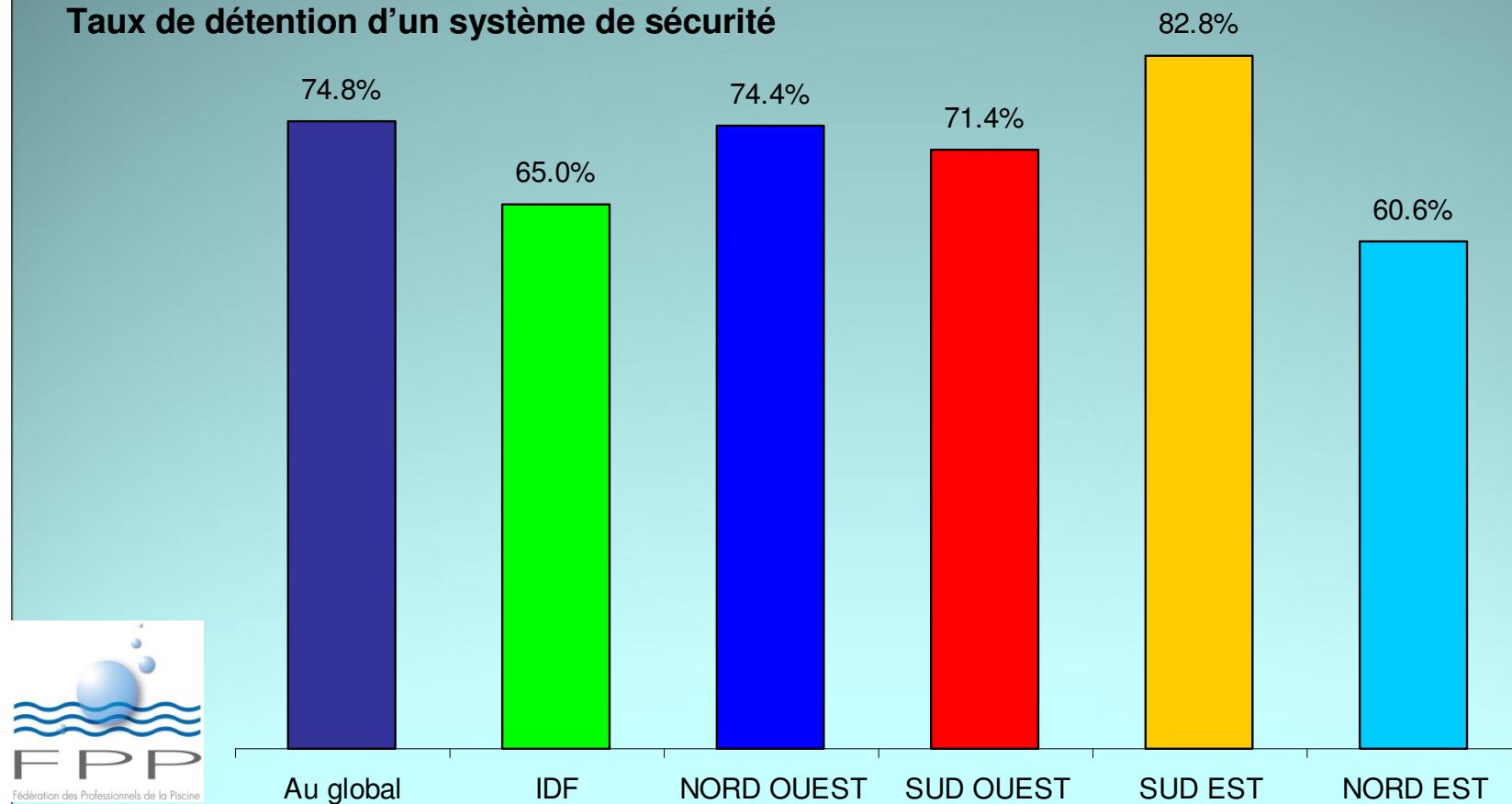
# Application today for the professionals

- Today, professionals systematically offer the protection system with the swimming pool, however, the consumer has the choice to buy it elsewhere.
- Professionnels have to supply their customers with a technical document to inform them about safety.
- When the law was introduced, there was demand on the market for the products. Manufacturers had to adapt their production capacity to supply customers. Currently, the market is contracting and manufacturers have had to reduce their production capacity.

# LES EQUIPEMENTS LIES AUX PISCINES EN 2007

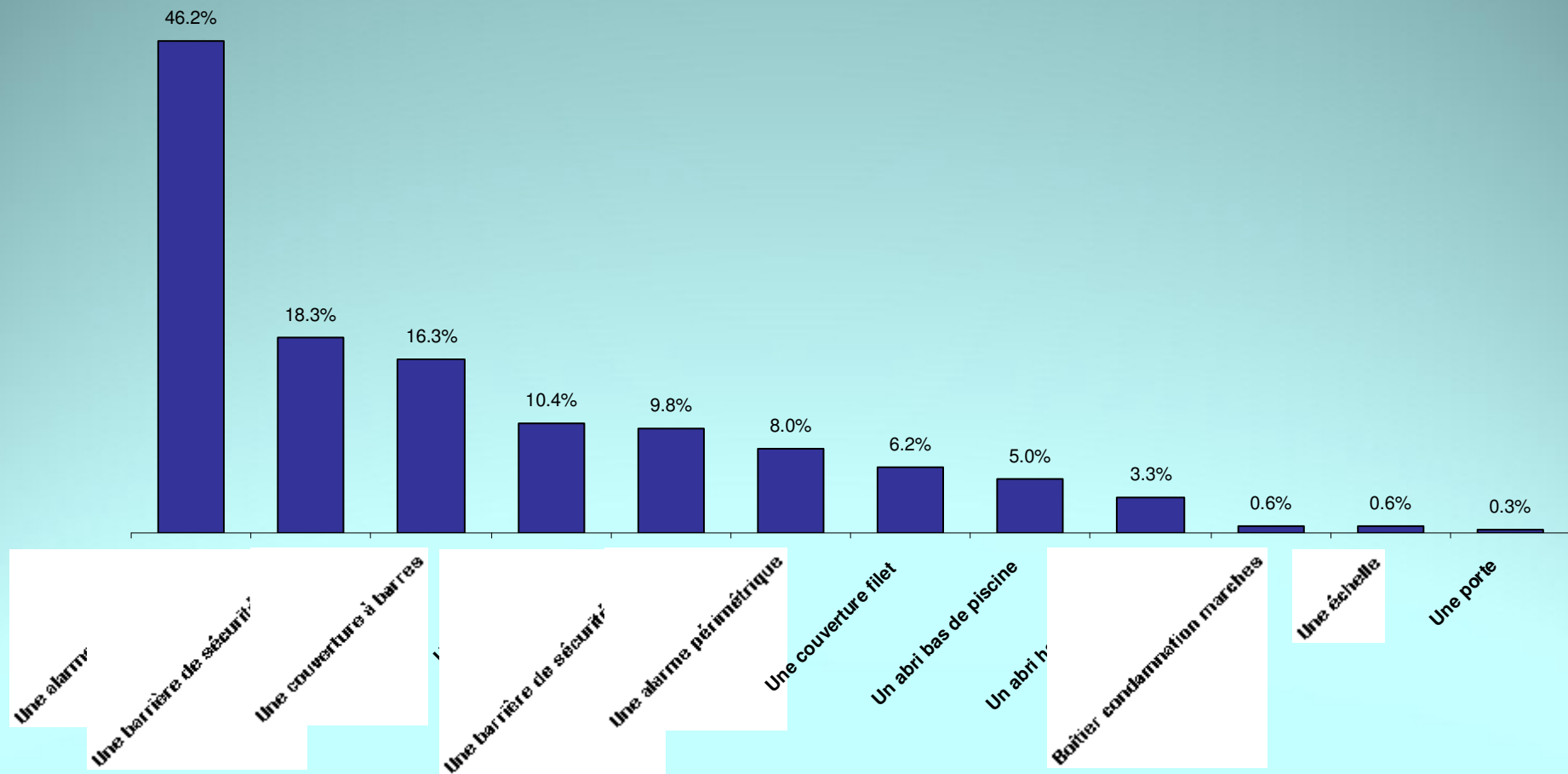
452 foyers français Détenteurs d'une seule piscine en 2007

## Taux de détention d'un système de sécurité



Dont 89.4% pour les piscines Enterrées et 28.4% pour les piscines Hors Sol.

# Le choix des consommateurs



- Obviously, that the application of this law cannot in itself prevent all accidents.
- However, the law has made the consumers more informed, and they are more aware now that they have to supervise their children.
- Prevention campaigns were very effective in reducing accidents before the law of 2004 was introduced.



# There are more Swimming pools and fewer accidents

Deaths of children in family pools	Year	Number of swimming pools	Observations
<b>32</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>708 000</b>	
<b>23</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>773 000</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>854 000</b>	Campagne prévention
<b>25</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>928 000</b>	Canicule
<b>17</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>1 056 000</b>	Application de la loi
<b>21</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>1 248 000</b>	Dernières statistiques INVS
<b>4</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1 346 000</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>2008</b>		



# FPP records the circumstances of each accident

- To complement the information held by the INVS, the FPP has been collecting newspaper articles relating to swimming pool drownings since 2005.

The last official statistics compiled by INVS were in 2006. That year, the FPP using its method of compiling statistics arrived at the same figures as the INVS.

- Since 2007, the FPP has contacted the emergency services for further information concerning any accidents it has been made aware of.
- **To summarise : a swimming pool, as a product or construction is not a danger in itself. The real danger is the risk of drowning which can happen at any water point.**

# The effectiveness of safety systems

- The effectiveness of protection systems depends on the way it is used by the consumer.
- However, through our statistics, we know that there are more accidents with barriers than with other safety systems even if it is chosen by only 28 % of swimming pools owners. (4 in 2008)
- According to our statistics, where alarms are present, there are fewer accidents than where barriers are present even though there are 50 % of swimming pools equipped with alarms. In most cases, alarms were not connected. (2 in 2008)

## Details of accidents with prevention systems

- In 2005 : 10 children deaths : 7 of them in swimming pools with prevention systems : 2 with alarms non actived , 3 with barriers, 2 with barriers + alarms
- In 2006 : 12 children deaths in inground swimming pools : 7 of them in protected swimming pools : 2 with alarms + bâches à bulles qui empêchent le bon fonctionnement, 2 with barriers, 2 with opened shelters, 1 with an opened cover
- In 2008 : 12 accidents 6 of them with deaths, 6 in protected swimming pools : 4 with barriers, 2 with alarms, 1 of them was not connected.

# Lessons to be learnt from this

- Older children should not supervise their younger brothers and sisters around the swimming pool.
- One responsible adult should be nominated to supervise the swimming pool during the bathing session.
- Teach the child to swim at an early age .
- The construction of the swimming pool is not a contributory factor for serious injuries in France.
- Safety systems are not a substitute for the vigilance of supervising adults, They are only complementary.
- « piscine protégée, faut quand même me surveiller »

# The standards

- France has 4 standards relating to the 4 different types of safety systems but there is no intention to propose their transformation into European standards.
- French law is perhaps not desirable in the other member states.
- Standards are useful in improving systems and we consider that in this case it could also assist other member states in drafting their safety regulations.