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### **Nearly 140 Child Drownings In Pools and Spas Reported By Media In Summer 2012**

*Initial summer drowning figures are only part of the annual toll*

**Fort Lauderdale, Florida** – According to information compiled from media reports and released today by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) [Pool Safely](#) campaign, 137 children younger than 15 drowned in a pool or spa between Memorial Day and Labor Day this year. An additional 168 children of that age required emergency response for non-fatal incidents in pools or spas during that period.

"Drowning is preventable, said Kim Burgess, executive director of the National Drowning Prevention Alliance based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "That's why the NDPA is committed to partnering with the CPSC's [Pool Safely](#) campaign to help educate the public.

"We urge everyone to follow the [Safer3](#) tips for best water safety practices," said Burgess. "For Safer Water, prevent children's unsupervised access with barriers and alarms; for Safer Kids, designate a ["Water Watcher"](#) to supervise kids when they are in or around water and teach them swimming and water safety skills from a young age; for Safer Response, learn CPR and have a phone and a reaching pole by the pool."

An analysis of news media reports for this summer show that 54 of these drownings occurred shortly after the children left an adult who was in their immediate vicinity, and 31 children drowned despite the presence of others at the pool.

This summer's news reports are consistent with CPSC's annual reports, showing that young children and toddlers are especially vulnerable to drowning— at least 100 of the 137 children who drowned were younger than 5. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 1 to 4.

"These figures are a strong indication that child drownings are a serious public health problem," said CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum. "We are losing too many children to drowning, tragically cutting short these young lives and leaving families devastated. While summer is ending, our vigilance in ensuring that all children pool safely must not end. With so many indoor community pools, hotel pools and spas, indoor waterparks, as well as outdoor pools that remain open in warm-weather states, we must continue our efforts to remind everyone to pool safely whenever they are near the water."

It's important to note that not every child drowning is reported on or tracked by the media. Moreover, it takes time for CPSC to compile data of all child drownings from around the country. Each May, CPSC releases reports of drownings and non-fatal submersions for children younger

than 15. CPSC data from 2007 to 2009 shows an annual average of 243 children drowned in pools or spas during the summer months. This is about 63 percent of the total annual drownings in those years.

During the summer of 2012, the following twelve states suffered the highest number of pool and spa drownings for children younger than 15:

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Texas (17)       | 7. Florida (6)        |
| 2. California (10)  | 8. Illinois (6)       |
| 3. Ohio (9)         | 9. North Carolina (6) |
| 4. Arizona (8)      | 10. Alabama (5)       |
| 5. Michigan (8)     | 11. Georgia (5)       |
| 6. Pennsylvania (7) | 12. New York (5)      |

[CPSC's 2012 submersion report](#) shows an average of 390 pool or spa-related drownings occur each year for children younger than 15, based on statistics from 2007-2009. Each year about 5,200 children younger than 15 were treated in emergency departments for pool or spa-related submersion injuries.

The *Pool Safely* campaign provides information on the simple steps that parents, caregivers and pool owners should ensure that children and adults stay safe around pools and spas:

- Stay close, be alert and watch children in and around the pool. Never leave children unattended in a pool or spa; always watch children closely around all bodies of water; teach children basic water safety skills; and keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings.
- Learn and practice water safety skills. Every family member should know how to swim. Learn how to perform CPR on both children and adults.
- Have appropriate equipment for your pool or spa. This includes pool fencing, a lockable safety cover for spas, proper drain covers to avoid entrapments and lifesaving equipment such as life rings and a reaching pole.

The *Pool Safely* campaign was launched in 2010 to raise awareness about pool and spa safety, as mandated by the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. This year the campaign is increasing its focus on populations most at risk of drowning, including children younger than five years old who represent about 75 percent of child drowning fatalities and African American and Hispanic children between the ages of 5 and 14 who drown at higher rates than white children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from USA Swimming indicates that 70 percent of African American children and 62 percent of Hispanic children cannot swim.

#### **About National Drowning Prevention Alliance:**

The National Drowning Prevention Alliance is a volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2004. NDPA members are dedicated to preventing drowning for all age groups in all bodies of water through public education, advocacy and strategic partnerships. The public is invited to join by visiting [NDPA.org](http://NDPA.org).

#### **About Pool Safely:**

The *Pool Safely* campaign is CPSC's national public education and information program to reduce child drownings, near-drowning and entrapment incidents in swimming pools and spas. The campaign resulted from the requirements of Section 1407 of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (P&SS Act), federal legislation signed into law in 2007, which mandated new requirements for pool and spa safety. Parents, caregivers and the media are encouraged to visit [PoolSafely.gov](http://PoolSafely.gov) or [@PoolSafely](https://twitter.com/PoolSafely) on Twitter for vital safety information regarding the prevention of child submersions in and around pools and spas.