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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Don't Let the 4<sup>th</sup> of July End in Tragedy**

### **Video urges parents to watch kids around water to stop drowning**

The head of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) today released a new [public service announcement](#) on YouTube urging anyone who cares for kids to "be on the lookout" to prevent child drowning and heat-related deaths this summer.

"The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is a great time for families to celebrate our nation and that often involves water sports, cookouts, and other outdoor activities," said Commissioner John Specia. "Don't let your holiday end in tragedy. Always watch children around water, and don't leave a child behind in a car even for a few minutes. "

35 children have already drowned in Texas this year, and two more died from heat after being left in cars. This year children have drowned in pools, ponds, creeks, lakes, rivers, bathtubs, a water park, a tank, a canal, a ditch, and a septic tank. Backyard and apartment pools are the most common location for child drowning, followed by natural bodies of water such as ponds, lakes, rivers, and creeks.

Last year, 82 children drowned in Texas, most of them between Memorial Day and Labor Day – when water activities peak. An average of 81 children a year drowned in Texas over the last four years. The lowest total was 74 in 2012 and the highest was 90 in 2011.

### **The younger the child, the greater the danger!**

While teens and older children drown each year, most victims are six years old or younger. Very young children are often fascinated with water and don't realize the danger. Remember that drowning is silent. Don't expect a child who is in trouble to call for help.

Children under the age of one most often drown inside the house. Older children most often drown outdoors. Outdoors, children most often drown in pools, especially backyard and apartment pools. Most young children who drown in pools were out of sight less than five minutes and were in the care of one or both parents at the time. Indoors, the bathtub is the most dangerous place.

For more statistics and information on water safety for kids, visit [WatchKidsAroundWater.org](http://WatchKidsAroundWater.org).

## **Basic Water Safety Tips**

### ***Inside the house***

- Never leave small children alone near any container of water.
- Keep bathroom doors closed and secure toilet lids with lid locks.
- Never leave a baby alone in a bath for any reason. Get the things you need before running water, and take the child with you if you must leave the room.
- Warn babysitters or caregivers about the dangers of water and stress the need to constantly supervise young children.
- Make sure small children cannot leave the house through pet doors or unlocked doors and reach pools or hot tubs.

### ***Outside the house***

- Never leave children alone around water whether it is in a pool, wading pool, drainage ditch, creek, pond, or lake.
- Constantly watch children who are swimming or playing in water. They need an adult or certified lifeguard watching and within reach.
- Secure access to swimming pools with fences, self-closing and latching gates, and water surface alarms.
- Completely remove the pool cover when the pool is in use.
- Store water toys away from the water, when not in use, so they don't attract a small child.
- Don't assume young children will use good judgment around water.
- Be ready for emergencies. Keep emergency telephone numbers handy and learn CPR.
- Find out if your child's friends or neighbors have pools.