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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Keep Kids Safe Around Water this Labor Day
Texas on pace to surpass last year in child drowning deaths**

Labor Day is the holiday that signals the end of summer and many families will head to the water to cool off. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) urges Texans to help keep the holiday a happy one by watching kids around water at all times.

"Labor Day is the last big weekend of summer, so we can't afford to let down our guard this weekend," says DFPS Commissioner John Specia. "Too many children have already lost their lives."

Texas is on pace so far in 2015 to surpass last year's total of 73 child drownings but is well below the all-time high of 90 set in 2011. Sixty-eight children have drowned in Texas so far this year. The Dallas-Fort Worth area leads the state with 25 child drownings this year, followed by the Houston area with 15.

Unfortunately, drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death among young children and most of these tragedies happen from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Swimming pools are by far the most likely place where children drown. This year, 33 Texas children and teens have drowned in swimming pools, 22 in lakes, ponds, and other natural waterways, eight died in bathtubs, and five drowned in various locations.

Toddlers and preschoolers are the most at risk, but this year an unusually high number of teenagers (10) have also drowned.

Children under a year old most often drown indoors (bathtubs, buckets, or toilets), while older children and teens usually drown outdoors. Most young children who drown are in the care of one or both parents at the time and are out of sight less than five minutes.

Learn more about child drowning and how to prevent it at WatchKidsAroundWater.org.

Basic Water Safety Tips

Inside the house

- Never leave small children alone near any container of water. This includes toilets, tubs, aquariums, or mop buckets.
- 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. Infants can drown in any amount of water. If you must leave the room, take the child with you.
- Warn babysitters or caregivers about the dangers of water to young children and stress the need for constant supervision.
- 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. Use 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 and caution 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.