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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, Sept 1, 2016

Keep Kids Safe Around Water this Labor Day
Child drowning in Texas hits seven-year high

Ninety-one (91) kids and teens have drowned in Texas this year, the state's highest total since 2009.

With thousands of families planning to spend the Labor Day weekend by swimming pools, lakes and beaches, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) urges parents and caregivers to keep constant watch on kids when they're around water, especially young children. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death for kids under the age of 5.

"It's sad because these are preventable tragedies," said Sasha Rasco, the chief of DFPS prevention programs. "Yes, we live in a fast-paced, multi-tasking world, but we all need to realize it only takes seconds for a child to drown when adults aren't paying close attention."

Learn more about child drowning deaths and how to prevent them at HelpAndHope.org. The website is full of water safety tips, drowning statistics, and a "Lifeguard 101" teaching tool. The goal is to educate and motivate parents and other adults to be vigilant about watching kids around water both indoors and outdoors, while also having fun and enjoying being active and together as a family.

Most child drownings happen in backyard or apartment swimming pools. Children also drown in ponds, rivers, lakes, coastal waters, drainage ditches, creeks, bathtubs, and anywhere there is water. Even a small amount of water can be deadly. Last month, an El Paso toddler drowned in a bucket.

"There are many common myths about drowning," said Rasco. "A lot of people think a young child will scream and wave their arms when they find themselves in water over their head. But, a drowning happens quickly and without warning and often with no cry for help. Drowning is a silent killer."

More

DFPS started a \$1 million advertising campaign in April for the Help for Parents, Hope for Kids Campaign, which is designed to help parents with some of their toughest parenting challenges. About a quarter of those dollars went to water safety messages, which will run through Memorial Day before ending on September 30. The summer months are the most dangerous time of the year for drowning.

Child Drownings in Texas - 10 year snapshot

Year	Drownings
2007	63
2008	82
2009	113
2010	79
2011	90
2012	74
2013	82
2014	73
2015	75
2016	91*

* Total from Jan. 1, 2016 to Aug. 31, 2016 *

Basic Water Safety Tips

Outside the house

- Never leave children alone around water whether it is in a pool, drainage ditch, creek, pond, lake, or beach.
- Constantly watch children who are swimming or playing in water. They need an adult or certified lifeguard watching and within reach.
- Secure 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.

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.