



RANCHO SANTA FE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

118027 Calle Ambiente / P.O. Box 410, Rancho Santa Fe, California 92067

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2011

CONTACT: Julie Taber
Public Information Officer
Office: (858) 756-6008
Mobile: (858) 775-7608

WATER SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. — Summer is almost here and with it comes the fun of outdoor activities. When most of us are enjoying time at the pool or beach, injuries aren't the first thing on our minds. Yet, drownings are the leading cause of injury and death for young children ages 1 to 4, and three children die every day as a result of drowning.

Whether swimming, boating, bathing, or simply spending time near water, it takes just a few seconds for an accident to happen, usually when a child is left unattended or during a brief lapse of supervision. A child can drown in as little as one inch of water, and drowning is usually quick and silent. They will lose consciousness two minutes after submersion, with irreversible brain damage occurring within four to six minutes.

Fortunately, drownings and near drownings are preventable. Taking the following actions can help save a life:

- Make sure pools and spas are enclosed on all four sides with a fence at least 60 inches high with a self-closing and latching gates. Latches should be a minimum of 54 inches from the ground and gates should open outward.
- **NEVER** allow children to be alone near a pool or any water source.
- Have life-saving devices near the pool, such as a hook, pole, or flotation device
- Do not allow children to play in pool area. Store all toys out of the pool area.
- **NEVER** leave children unattended in or around a pool. **ALWAYS** have a designated child watcher. If you leave the pool area take all children with you.
- Any door that provides direct access to the pool should have an exit alarm installed.
- Drains in pools and spas should have anti-entrapment drain covers.
- Learn infant and child CPR and always have a phone near the pool for emergency use. If possible, the phone should be a "landline" rather than a cell phone.

- Children should always swim under the supervision of a grown-up. Adults watching kids near water should avoid distracting activities like playing cards, reading books, or talking on the phone. If there are a lot of people around, such as in a pool party setting, designate at least one adult to be a “Water Watcher” to monitor swimmers at all times.
- Every child over the age of three should have swimming lessons. Even then, they are still susceptible to danger in the water, especially if something causes them to panic.
- Children using air-filled swimming aids should always be supervised by an adult within arm’s reach.
- When diving, always protect your head and neck by extending your arms over your head. Never dive into shallow water or water with an unknown depth.
- A U.S. Coast guard approved lifejacket should be worn for water sports such as tubing, skiing or jet skiing. Air-filled aids such as inner tubes, water wings and inflatable rafts are not substitutes for approved lifejackets.
- Most boating accidents involve the consumption of alcohol. Never drink while operating a boat.

Following these simple guidelines can help everyone have a fun and safe time under the sun this summer. For more information on water safety, including building code requirements for residential pools, please visit our website at www.rsf-fire.org.

The mission of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is “To protect life, property, and environment through prevention, preparedness, education and emergency response.” Formed in 1946, the Fire District now spans approximately 38-square miles and protects over 29,000 citizens. The Fire District currently operates out of four full-time fire stations and serves the communities within and surrounding Rancho Santa Fe, Fairbanks Ranch, and 4S-Ranch.

Sources: National Fire Protection Association, www.safekids.org, Yale Medical Group, and Centers for Disease Control

###