Summer Safety at Home: Swimming

As we head into the holiday weekend, many of you will be trying to find a wet, shady spot to beat the heat. Every year too many adults and children drown during the summer months. Because safety is important both on and off the job, think about these water safety tips before heading to the lake, the pool, or the ocean.

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone.

- Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard.

- Read and obey all rules and posted signs.

- Children or inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal floatation device (PFD) when around the water.

- Watch out for the dangerous "too's" – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

- Set water safety rules for the whole family based on swimming abilities (for example, inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep).

- Be knowledgeable of the water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth charges, obstructions and where the entry and exit points are located. The more informed you are, the more aware you will be of hazards and safe practices.

- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.

- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.

- Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.

- Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.

Have Fun. Be Safe.

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