



St. John Ambulance

SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – PRESS RELEASE

St. John Ambulance: Water Activities – and Safety –

Boaters – cottage owners – and just about anybody who goes near water

Mississauga, May 7, 2009 Recent statistics show, that except for motor vehicle accidents, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children under the age of five. Children in that age group are more than four times as likely to drown as those over the age of 19. Any activity that involves water has the hidden hazard of drowning. We all must remember that swimming lessons are not always enough to protect children or any family member, from possible disaster. So with another summer season rapidly approaching, we need to be reminded of the importance of First Aid and CPR training prior to setting out on our holidays or opening our backyard pools.

Responsibility also includes **Actively Supervising** your children. This should be the number one priority among parents. Drownings often occur during a short, temporary lapse in adult supervision. According to the new national survey, 42 per cent of all children between 5 and 14 who drowned in the past ten years did not have an adult watching them at the time. Despite knowing how to swim, even older children can get into difficult situations, not recognizing that perhaps they overestimated their skills, strength or the water's depth. Parents and caregivers need to stay within sight and reach, when children are in, on or around water.

Getting Trained is vital to dealing with an emergency. Know how to perform First Aid and CPR. The survey results indicate that Canadian parents are not trained or prepared to deal with an emergency.

41% of Canadian parents polled ranked their swimming skills as failing
40% of parents do not know CPR
And only 23% are trained in water rescue.

These skills are critical to preventing long-term injury, disability or even death. Adults need training before they can properly supervise children of any age.

Creating Barriers around pools is being urged by Safe Kids Canada. A wall of a house with direct access to a pool area is not a barrier for an inquisitive child nor reassurance for a busy parent. Safe Kids Canada suggests Canadians should be encouraged to change municipal by-laws requiring four-sided fencing to a height of 1.2 metres (4 ft) with a self-closing, self-latching gate around all in-ground, aboveground and inflatable home swimming pools.

Lifejackets are designed to keep you afloat but only if worn properly. They should in no way replace the supervision provided by a trained adult or person in authority.

Teaching Kids to Swim by enrolling them in classes is a developmental milestone. And as parents – Learn to Swim – everyone can learn to swim. Take lessons from a certified instructor.

And Remember While on Vacation:

- Know your limits. Don't try to prove a point around water. Respect your limits and don't show off. You may be testing more than your ability to perform a trick.
- Swim safely.
- Never swim in an area frequented by motorized watercraft. Make sure you can be seen and swim along the shore rather than away from it.
- "Take a "buddy". Never go swimming or out on a lake alone. Make sure someone on shore knows where you're going and when to expect you back.
- Learn to "drown proof". Even strong swimmers can tire or suffer a cramp. Knowing how to rest while afloat may save your life.
- Watch the weather. Never swim or enter the water in an electrical storm. Lightning striking the water can have deadly consequences.
- Use watercraft wisely. Before operating any watercraft, make sure you stay within its weight capacity and loading requirements. Be sure of sound mechanical condition and that all lifesaving and rescue equipment are on board and are in good working order.
- Rescue safely. Should you need to rescue someone from deep water, be sure you know how. Do not go into the water to rescue unless you are proficient in rescue techniques.
- Bring a properly outfitted first aid kit. A day of water fun can be the cause of sunburn, minor cuts or scrapes. Always be prepared with a quality first aid kit, as provided by St. John Ambulance.

For more information on St. John Ambulance community services, training programs or volunteer opportunities, please call 905-568-1905 or visit our web site at www.sja-mississauga.ca.

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St. John Ambulance is dedicated to improving the health and the safety of the community through training and community service.

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