



MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

This Drowning Prevention Week, St. John Ambulance Wants People to Make Pool Safety a Priority

July 16, 2010 (Toronto, ON) – Each summer, children anxiously await the opening of public and private pools, so they can enjoy a refreshing swim on a hot day. Unfortunately, this fun and healthy activity can quickly turn to tragedy. Every year hundreds of Ontario youth (zero to 19 years of age) are hospitalized for drowning and near drowning incidents. Of that number 24% succumbed to their injuries.

The most common drowning/near drowning incidents take place in swimming pools, and typically involve children 5 years old and younger. This Drowning Prevention Week, July 17-24, 2010 St. John Ambulance would like to encourage everyone to make pool safety a top priority. Here are some tips to get you started:

Supervise for Safety: Under no circumstances should children be left unsupervised while they are around a pool.

Adults Only: Adults should be the only ones acting as pool supervisors; do not leave it in the hands of older children or siblings.

First and Foremost: Learn first aid. Knowing what to do in an emergency is incredibly empowering and can help you make a difference to the survival outcome of a friend or loved one.

Show Some Class: Encourage everyone in the family to take swimming lessons; they will learn to become stronger swimmers and recognize when they need a break.

Restricted Area: By-laws require a barrier such as a fence to ensure unsupervised children can't accidentally fall into a pool.

Sound the Alarm: Install a motion sensor alarm around pools/spas that will alert everyone in the house when someone is trying to go into the pool/spa area. There are also floating pool alarms available commercially, to alert if someone has fallen in the pool.

Slow and Steady: Make sure no one is running around the pool as surfaces can become slippery and a bad fall can follow.

Rule the Pool: Establish rules for the pool that everyone must follow when using your pool. For example, everyone must get out of the pool for dry time whenever the adult supervisor needs to go in the house.

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training over 140,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community offering such unique and innovative programs as; medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services. As a charitable, non-denominational, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and first aid product sales directly support these vital community services programs. For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses and volunteer opportunities visit, www.sja-mississauga.ca.

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