

Public Health Provides Water Safety Tips

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BAKERSFIELD, CA – As temperatures rise and families take to their backyard swimming pools and visit other bodies of water to cool off, Kern County Public Health urges everyone to take steps to keep your kids safe. While water can be great fun for kids, it can also pose serious dangers. Safe Kids International reports that drowning is the third leading cause of death among children.

According to the Kern County Child Death Review Team (CDRT), since 2014, we have lost 32 Kern County children to accidental drowning and 27 of those were less than six years old. In 2019, seven children died from accidental drowning.

Some commonalities among the drowning cases reviewed by CDRT include:

- **Lapse in Supervision** - 100% of all 27 accidental child drownings under the age of six years occurred where there was a lapse in supervision. There was confusion about who was supervising or simple lapse in direct supervision by the caregiver.
- **Safety mechanism failures** - Half of the young child drownings occurred in residences where one or more safety mechanisms were in place but were not being used as they were intended.
- **Lack of CPR initiation** - In 1/3 of these drownings, CPR was not initiated or attempted by the caregiver.
- **Pools** – More than 90% of young child drownings occurred in pools.

The drowning of a child is a tragic occurrence for families and communities. Thankfully, parents and caregivers can play a key role in protecting the children they love from drowning.

Water safety tips:

- Watch kids when they are in or around water, without being distracted. Keep young children within arm's reach of an adult.
- Empty all tubs, buckets, containers and kiddie pools immediately after use.
- Install fences around home pools. A pool fence should surround all sides of the pool and be at least four feet tall with self-closing and self-latching gates.
- Learn CPR. Performing resuscitation on a drowning victim in the time it takes for first responders to arrive could save their life.

To learn more visit our website kernpublichealth.com or Safe Kids International safekids.org.

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