

Water Safety

This Summer, Don't Take A Vacation From Safety

(NAPSA)—Summer is a wonderful time of year; children and parents look forward to outdoor activities at the pool, lake and beach. Yet accidents can happen if families take a vacation from safety. The good news is that most water tragedies can be prevented if everyone remembers the basic rules of water safety.

Connie Harvey, American Red Cross national health and safety expert, reminds families to follow these safety tips for staying healthy and safe in or around the water:

- Learn to swim. One of the best things anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. No one, including adults, should ever swim alone. Adults should practice “reach supervision,” which means to be within arm’s length of a child in case an emergency occurs.

- Outfit everyone with the proper gear. Kids—and even adults—who are not strong swimmers should use U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) whenever they are in or around the water. “This lightweight plastic equipment, when used properly, can help save lives,” says Harvey. Everyone, including strong swimmers, should use an approved PFD when boating.

- Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. A first aid kit, cordless phone, phone list with emergency contact information, a reaching pole and a plastic ring buoy with a nylon line attached are recommended. “Plastic makes the ring buoy so light even a child



U.S. Coast-Guard approved plastic personal flotation devices can help save kids' lives.

can save a life if the need arises,” points out Harvey. “These items coupled with a pool emergency action plan—similar to a fire drill—help the whole family breathe a little easier.”

- Pack a “safety bag” for a day at the beach or lake. Waterproof sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, water shoes to keep feet safe, and plenty of water are musts. Use plastic tubes and water bottles to prevent creation of sharp objects that can injure kids’ feet.

- Learn Red Cross first aid and CPR. “It is important to know what to do when a dangerous situation arises,” says Harvey. All caregivers, including grandparents, older siblings and babysitters should have these lifesaving skills.

For more information on staying safe in and around the water, visit www.redcross.org or contact your local American Red Cross chapter.