



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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WATER WATCHER CARDS CAN HELP SAVE LIVES; CHILD DROWNING DEATHS INCREASE 89% IN SUMMER

As Pools Open for Summer Remember to Actively Supervise Kids in and Around Water

Boise, ID (May 24, 2007) –Memorial Day weekend typically marks the annual start of summer causing many people across the state of Idaho to open their pools. St. Luke's and Safe Kids Treasure Valley are offering a free tool to help parents keep kids safe in and around water this summer, which is the most dangerous time of year for kids.

Drowning deaths among children ages 14 and under increase 89 percent in the summer over the average annual monthly rate, with 64 percent of all children's drowning deaths occurring in the summer months.

With the increased likelihood of drowning in mind, Safe Kids has created the *Water Watcher Card*, which should be passed between adults who are taking turns acting as the Designated Watcher of children in and around water.

“This card will help save lives this summer because it will remind parents that they need to stay focused on the kids regardless of the number of other adults that are present,” said Alissa Lean, Safe Kids Treasure Valley coordinator. “We just want to remind parents that they need to actively watch their children at all times when around water.”

This tool is free and simple to use. Active supervision via the *Water Watcher Card* requires that one adult is responsible for children and they should not be engaged in any other poolside activities, including talking or reading. In set intervals – 15 minutes at a time is a good starting point – the person holding the *Water Watcher Card* becomes the Designated Watcher and must keep his/her eyes on the children. After 15 minutes, the card is passed to another adult, who then becomes the Designated Watcher. This card can be downloaded at www.usa.safekids.org, click on the Summer Safety box, and then click on the *Water Watcher Card* icon.

“Any parent who has been to the pool knows that when *everyone* is watching the children, no one really is,” Alissa Lean said, adding that taking your eyes off of a child for even a few seconds can be disastrous. “If you're engaged in a conversation or looking at a magazine, you're not providing active supervision.”

(MORE)

Drowning occurs quickly and quietly. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child loses consciousness after only two minutes under water and irreversible brain damage occurs after four to six minutes of submersion. Even if the child is resuscitated after that time, he or she will likely suffer permanent brain damage. Most children who drown are found after approximately 10 minutes.

This summer, St. Luke's has teamed up with Safe Kids Treasure Valley to keep kids safe around pools with the St. Luke's Summer Pool Safety campaign. The *Water Watcher Card* is a component of this campaign.

To schedule a free information session for your neighborhood about water safety and how to keep kids safe this summer call Alissa Lean at 381-3033, or for more summer safety tips and to download your Water Watcher Cards go to www.usa.safekids.org, click on the Summer Safety box, and then click on the *Water Watcher Card* icon.

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