



**American
Red Cross**

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2, 2014

The American Red Cross, Illinois DCFS & Illinois Association of Park Districts Team Up to Promote Water Safety

Drowning prevention push comes ahead of holiday weekend

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The American Red Cross, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and Illinois Association of Park Districts are reminding the public about the importance of water safety for children and adults ahead of the Independence Day weekend.

Every year, there are between 80 and 90 drowning deaths reported in Illinois, and most, if not all drownings are preventable.

“Already this year, the numbers are heartbreaking: Eight Illinois children have lost their lives in water-related accidents in May and June alone,” says Illinois DCFS spokeswoman Karen Hawkins. “We’re encouraging parents and caregivers to ‘Get water wise and supervise.’ Tragedy can strike in just the few moments when an adult’s back is turned or attention is distracted.”

“Swimming is the most popular summer activity,” said Ann Kappeler, service delivery manager for Preparedness, Health and Safety Services for the American Red Cross. “The best thing you can do to help your family stay safe and avoid accidents is to enroll in age-appropriate swim lessons and practice ‘reach supervision.’ Always be just an arm’s reach away from children in water.”

“Park districts and recreation agencies are often the heart of their communities, a place for gathering and bonding, but they also fill a critical need – education,” said Bobbie Jo Hill, public relations director for the Illinois Association of Park Districts. “Education is key to combating this important issue, and we are honored to be a part of this team to share the important message about drowning prevention.”

“Roughly one in five people who die from drowning are children ages 14 and younger, and for every child who dies from drowning, another five go to the emergency department,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “For young children, it has been shown that formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by as much as 88 percent. Help keep kids safe this summer by making sure they know how to swim and watching them closely in and around pools.”

Water Safety Tips for Children and Adults

- **Know how to swim and make sure your children know how to swim.** Formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by as much as 88 percent among young children 1-4, who are at the greatest risk of drowning.
- **Learn Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).** In the time it might take for lifeguards or paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could save someone's life.
- **Even if a child knows how to swim, watch him or her closely around any body of water, no matter how shallow.** Designate a responsible adult who can swim and knows CPR to watch swimmers in or around the water – even when lifeguards are present. That adult should not be involved in any other distracting activity (such as reading, or talking on the phone) while watching children.
- **Stay within arm's reach** while a child is in the water.
- **Use life jackets** appropriately.
- **Don't rely on substitutes.** Air-filled toys like “water wings”, “noodles” and inner-tubes are **NOT** safety devices and should not be substituted for a life jacket or adult supervision.
- **Get Water wise...Supervise!:** Don't assume someone else is supervising a toddler or child who likes to wander.

For the past 100 years, the Red Cross has helped millions of kids, teens and adults learn how to swim and become lifeguards and instructors so the water can be a safer place for everyone. The Red Cross offers a variety of water safety classes in partnership with other community organizations across Illinois. More information about Red Cross water safety is available at www.redcross.org/watersafety

*The Illinois **Department of Children and Family Services** receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse hotline at 1-800-252-ABUSE (2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child. Visit our [Water Safety Information](#) page or www.DCFS.Illinois.gov for resources for parents and caregivers.*

*The **American Red Cross** shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please www.visitredcross.org or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.*

*The **Illinois Association of Park Districts** is a nonprofit service, research and education organization that serves park districts, forest preserves, conservation, municipal park and recreation, and special recreation agencies. The association advances these agencies, their citizen board members and professional staff in their ability to provide outstanding park and recreation opportunities, preserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for all people in Illinois.*

Satellite Coordinates

Slug: Drowning Prevention

Date: 07/02/2014

Time: 2:00 PM (CT) – 2:15 PM (CT)

Satellite: AMC 15KU

Transponder: 02

Slot: D9

Downlink Frequency: 11753.5

Downlink Polarization: H

Bandwidth: 9 MHz

Symbol Rate: 3.978729

FEC: 3 / 4

Data Rate: 5.5

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