

Water Safety Council – Press Conference

Summer means fun in the water for the entire family. A time to play on the beach or the shoreline and around the pool. However fun around the water can easily lead to tragedy and untold grief for families through injury or premature loss of life of a loved one.

Even though this summer season is yet young, there have already been incidences of near drownings. These were due to inattention by adults with young children.

The Bermuda Water Safety Council would like to emphasize the need to properly supervise children when on the beach and shorelines and around public and private pools. Children can get into trouble quickly, even in shallow water. Adults must ensure that someone is responsible and carefully watching young children at all times. Sitting off and enjoying the beach party while the children run around unsupervised, is a recipe for disaster.

Diving into shallow water around our coast lines is also a very dangerous past time. Numerous accidents happen each year, some leading to death or permanent disability. Many young lives have been forever changed as a result of diving accidents.

So too is the danger around both private and public pools. Parents and guardians should accompany their young children at public pools, as supervision may not always be up to proper standards. In the end parents and guardians must accept responsibility for any incident that involves those within their care. Private pools can be a special danger because of the familiarity of the surroundings and a sense of complacency that may set in. Not everyone has the same appreciation for the potential for accidents to occur. Young children do not have such appreciation and may venture beyond expected limits.

You can make this a safe summer for you and your family by doing the following:

- Always ensure that young children are well supervised, at all times, when near the ocean or the pool
- Set ground rules for using the pool with no exceptions allowed
- Adhere to public warning signs regarding hazards such as heavy surf, rip tides and dangerous creatures such as the Portuguese-man-of-war, sharks etc.
- Make sure there are life guards on duty or, at the very least, a flotation device with an attached lanyard which can be thrown to a person experiencing difficulty in the water
- Wear personal flotation devices (life jackets) on small boats - especially with children and those who cannot swim - also have at the least one PFD on board for each passenger
- Avoid children sitting on the bow of the boat, especially small fast vessels where a large wake or quick stop could be disastrous
- Keep pool gates locked at all times with child proof locks
- Keep a first aid kit available when playing around the beach - consult with a pharmacist regarding contents for your sea safety first aid kit
- Avoid diving into water where the depth is shallow or unknown
- Make a personal commitment to have a safe a fun summer for you and your entire family

Finally, the Bermuda Water Safety Council would like to wish everyone in Bermuda a fun and safe Summer. Please visit our website at: www.wsc.bm for more information.