



Water Safety: It's Learning to Swim and So Much More *Water Safety USA Announces 2016's Messaging*

Colorado Springs, COLORADO, May 3, 2016 - Recently established Water Safety USA, a [consortium of 13](#) national governmental and nongovernmental organizations, is excited to announce the group's primary safety message for 2016; 'Water Safety: it's learning to swim and so much more.'

Each organization will take time to focus its swim season messaging to assert that everyone should learn swimming and basic water safety skills before they are unexpectedly in the water. Water Safety USA also offers many resources provided by the organizations at watersafetyusa.org which provides help on why and how a person should learn to swim.

The messaging falls in line with May as the [National Water Safety Month](#), which promotes safety in, on, or around bodies of water for people of all ages. Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for children aged 1-14 years old¹. In fact, more children aged 1-4 years die from drowning than any other cause except birth defects². These deaths are preventable which is why the opening month of swim season, May, is also known as [National Drowning Prevention Month](#).

“Warm weather is on the way, which means many families will be heading to beaches, pools, lakes, and waterparks. The many organizations that make up Water Safety USA want to make sure the adults are prepared and inform them on how beneficial swim lessons can be,” said Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph. D., a Water Safety USA representative from the National Swimming Pool Foundation. “The CDC reported in 2015 that every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning. It breaks my heart because drowning is preventable with proper lessons and following simple safety tips³.”

Water safety is about having an educated respect for the water, including an understanding of the layers of protection needed to keep the public safer when in, on, and around water. Water Safety USA has come together to promote learning to swim to the public and to educate through safety tips for each outlet of aquatic fun. Messages and tips on safety at pools and waterparks, natural bodies of water, and the home environment can be found at watersafetyusa.org. Water Safety USA encourages anyone to use the messaging and tips, including organizations or groups.

Drowning is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for all ages in the United States⁴, which is why Water Safety USA highly encourages people of all ages to participate in formal swim lessons. The likelihood of a child drowning can be reduced by 88 percent with formal swim lessons⁵.

Learning to swim means much more than learning strokes though; it is learning water survival skills, practicing water safety, and developing comfort in the water. Drowning is a silent killer that can be avoided when children and parents are taught water safety and basic swim skills.

To read a comprehensive list of water safety tips, resources, proper terminology, and Water Safety USA's associated organizations, please see the attached Media Guide.

About Water Safety USA

Water Safety USA is a consortium of leading national governmental and nongovernmental organizations with a strong record of providing drowning prevention and water safety programs. Our mission is to empower people with resources, information, and tools to safely enjoy and benefit from our nation's aquatic environments. To learn more about Water Safety USA and how to swim and why, visit watersafetyusa.org.



Cited Resources:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Water-Related Injuries*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html>.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts*. (Accessed: December 28, 2015); <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

⁵ Ruth A. Brenner, Gitanjali Saluja Taneja, Denise L. Haynie, Ann C. Trumble, Cong Qian, Ron M. Klinger, and Mark A. Klebanoff, "Association Between Swimming Lessons and Drowning in Childhood: A Case-Control Study," *Archive of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 2009; 163(3):203-210. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=381058&resultClick=3>.

Water Safety USA 2016 Messaging

Water Safety: It's Learning to Swim and So Much More

Why Learn to Swim:

- Learning to swim means much more than learning strokes; it is learning water survival skills, water safety, and developing comfort in the water.
- Water safety is about having an educated respect for the water, including an understanding of the layers of protection needed to keep ourselves and our loved ones safer when in, on, and around water.



Facts About Drowning:

- Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning.¹
- Drowning is the leading cause of injury deaths for children 1-4 years.²
- Among those 1-14, fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death behind motor vehicle crashes.²
- Drowning is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for all ages in the United States.²
- Participation in **formal swim lessons** can reduce the likelihood of childhood drowning death by **88%**.³
- Injuries from drowning kill more kids 1-4 years than any other cause except birth defects.²
- Drowning is a silent killer—most young children who died by drowning in pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight less than five minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time.⁴

Water Safety Tips:

Pools and Waterparks

- Learn to swim
- Swim with someone else (swim with a buddy)
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Avoid underwater breath-holding activities and games
- Use appropriately fitting Coast Guard approved life jackets
- Designate a water watcher and supervise children closely
- Choose venues with lifeguards
- Learn CPR

Natural Bodies of Water (Lakes, Rivers and Oceans)

- Learn to swim
- Swim near a lifeguard
- Swim with a buddy
- Check with the lifeguards about hazards
- Use sunscreen and drink water
- Obey posted signs and flags
- Keep the beach and water clean
- Learn [rip current safety](#)
- Enter water feet first – don't dive
- Wear an appropriately fitting Coast Guard approved life jacket



At Home

- Empty all tubs, buckets, containers, and wading pools immediately after use
- Keep toilet lids closed and use toilet seat locks
- Remove toys and cover hot tubs
- Install four-sided, four-foot fencing around pools and spas, and use self-closing, self-latching gates
- Learn CPR

Proper Terminology for Media

Drowning is not always a fatal event. Some people die as a result of drowning, while others survive with serious, life-long injuries, or none at all. Thus, the term “drowning” should not be used to imply death. According to the World Health Organization: “Drowning is the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid. Drowning outcomes are classified as death, morbidity and no morbidity. Agreed terminology is essential to describe the problem and to allow effective comparisons of drowning trends. Thus, this definition of drowning adopted by the 2002 World Congress on Drowning should be widely used.”⁵

About Water Safety USA:

Water Safety USA is a roundtable of longstanding national nonprofit and governmental organizations with a strong record of providing drowning prevention and water safety programs, including public education. Currently, thirteen organizations make up Water Safety USA.

Purpose:

Each year, the members of Water Safety USA select a single water safety topic that all members agree to promote collaboratively throughout the year. Our message is announced in spring, just prior to the busy summer season.

In addition, Water Safety USA promotes water safety by:

- Promoting a national dialog and focus on water safety
- Engaging related organizations to assist
- Drawing the attention of public officials
- Identifying areas of needed water safety research

- Meeting regularly to align our individual efforts

Mission:

We empower people with resources, information, and tools to safely enjoy and benefit from our nation's aquatic environments. The overarching approach of Water Safety USA is to engage in ongoing dialog aimed at improving our aggregate delivery of water safety information, tools, and resources such that they are as effective as possible.

Strategy:

We collaborate to enhance our individual, organizational efforts to promote water safety and prevent drowning.

Water Safety USA Organizations:

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[American Red Cross](#)

[Boy Scouts of America](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[National Park Service](#)

[National Safe Boating Council](#)

[National Swimming Pool Foundation](#)

[Safe Kids Worldwide](#)

[U.S. Coast Guard](#)

[U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#)

[United States Lifesaving Association](#)

[USA Swimming Foundation](#)

[YMCA of the USA](#)

Resources:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Water-Related Injuries. (Accessed: December 28, 2015);

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/index.html>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts. (Accessed: December 28, 2015);

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>.

³ Ruth A. Brenner, Gitanjali Saluja Taneja, Denise L. Haynie, Ann C. Trumble, Cong Qian, Ron M. Klinger, and Mark A. Klebanoff, "Association Between Swimming Lessons and Drowning in Childhood: A Case-Control Study," *Archive of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 2009; 163(3):203-210. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=381058&resultClick=3>

⁴ Present P, Child drowning study: A report on the epidemiology of drowning in residential pools to children under age 5. (1987) Washington, DC, US Consumer Product Safety Commission.

⁵ World Health Organization, Violence and Injury Prevention: Drowning. (Accessed: December 28, 2015);

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/other_injury/drowning/en/.