



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry L. McFadden offers Tips for a Safe 4th of July Weekend

Sheriff McFadden wants citizens to use caution when swimming at a beach or at a pool. Sheriff added, "Sadly, most deaths from drowning occur within a few feet of safety." The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. The Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To find out where lessons are offered, or to enroll in a CPR/AED or first aid course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

At a swimming pool, take the following precautions:

- If no lifeguard is on duty, do not let children swim unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult who knows lifesaving techniques and first aid.
- Post CPR instructions and directions to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.
- Look around the pool area to be certain lifesaving devices are readily available for emergency use.
- Be sure covers are installed on all drains of a swimming pool or in a wading pool. The suction created by the pool's circulating pumps can be very dangerous unless it is reduced by covers.
- Take frequent breaks (about once an hour) where everyone gets out of the water, drinks water, reapplies water resistant sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) and rests.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom, and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area.
- To reduce the risk of eye, ear, nose or throat infection from contaminated water, swim only in pools in which water quality is properly maintained. The water should appear crystal clear, be continuously circulated and be maintained at a level that allows free overflow into the gutter or skimmer. There should not be a strong odor of ammonia or chlorine.

At the beach, take the following precautions:

- Swim in a supervised, marked area with a lifeguard present, and swim with others. Never swim alone.
- If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, turn and swim toward shore. If you can't swim to the shore, float or tread water until you are free of the rip current and then head toward shore.
- Watch out for the "dangerous "toos" – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Look for water that is reasonably clear and free of floating materials and odors. Avoid swimming at beaches where there are large populations of ducks, geese or gulls. The waste produced by these birds causes high bacteria levels in the water.
- Look for movement in the water; it helps keep the water clean. Do not swim in stagnant or still water.
- Do not swim at any beach right after a heavy rain. Runoff following a heavy rain may result in a high bacteria level.
- When diving at a beach, exercise extreme caution. Beach water is not as clear as water in a pool, so underwater obstructions may not be visible.
- Avoid having beach water in your mouth or nose.

Sheriff McFadden encourages everyone to follow these precautions to help the children and citizens of Mecklenburg County stay safe and healthy this holiday weekend and throughout the summer.