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Pool and Swimming Safety Tips to Avoid Serious Injuries and Death

BOSTON - (June 2011) – With the coming heat, our kids will be looking for the closest pool or swimming hole to cool off. Parents need to know the basic rules of safety so that a day at the pool or beach does not turn disastrous.

Each day, about 10 people die in unintentional drownings across the country – or 3,443 in 2007 alone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many of these victims are young children. For every person who dies, many more are treated in hospitals for non-fatal submersion injuries. Alcohol use is involved in up to half of teen and adult deaths associated with water recreation.

Many of these injuries to our children could have been prevented if parents had followed the basic safety rules for pools and swimming. The purpose of this release is to publicize these simple precautions.

“Swimming should be a source of pleasure not danger,” said Boston attorney Marc L. Breakstone. “If parents take minimal precautions, they can ensure their children’s safety.”

Marc L. Breakstone is a Boston lawyer with 25 years of experience handling personal injury and premises liability cases. He can speak about the civil liabilities homeowners and property owners may face related to swimming pool and water accidents. Contact him by telephone at 617-723-7676, cell phone at 617-851-0808 or e-mail at breakstone@bwglaw.com.

Top Pool and Swimming Safety Tips

- Residential pools must be secured by a fence at least four feet tall.
- Keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapments.
- Make sure your children are not wearing any loose jewelry, hair accessories or clothing that could get caught in pool drains or other pool equipment.

- If you have a home spa, install and use a child-proof locked safety cover to keep children out.
- Before allowing kids to dive, make sure the water is at least 10 feet deep.
- Always watch your children when they are in the water, even if they know how to swim. Do not drink alcohol if you are supervising young swimmers.
- Adults watching a group of children swim should assign at least one adult to the exclusive task of watching the children.
- Adults supervising young children should practice “touch supervision” and be close enough to reach the child at all times.
- Enroll your child in swimming lessons and learn to swim yourself.
- Take a class in CPR. Children 13 and older should also learn CPR.
- If you are using a public pool or beach, only swim where lifeguards are on duty and in their lifeguard’s stand. Stay and watch your children.
- Avoid swimming at the beach on windy days. Wind can create undertows and dangerous swimming conditions.
- Children under the age of 12 are required to wear life jackets when boating in Massachusetts. They should also wear life jackets when swimming.
- Do not body surf or allow your child to body surf. Body surfing is one of the leading causes of catastrophic spinal cord injuries.
- At lakes and ponds, make sure to check the water’s depth before swimming.

About Breakstone, White & Gluck, PC

Breakstone, White & Gluck, PC, is a Boston law firm which represents injured plaintiffs in personal injury and medical malpractice cases. The firm has established a reputation as one of the top personal injury firms in Massachusetts. Notable cases include the case against a surgeon who left a patient on the operating table to cash a check, and several multi-million dollar cases arising from medical malpractice, EMT malpractice and motor vehicle accidents.