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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nearly 140 Tragic Child Drownings In Pools and Spas Reported By Media In Summer 2012

Initial summer drowning figures are only part of the annual toll

According to information compiled from media reports and released today by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) *Pool Safely* campaign, 137 children younger than 15 years drowned in a pool or spa during the traditional summer season of Memorial Day to Labor Day this year. An additional 168 children of that age required emergency response for near-fatal incidents in pools or spas during that period.

The media figures for this summer show that 54 of these drownings occurred soon after the children left an adult who was in their immediate vicinity, and 31 children drowned despite the presence of others at the pool.

In addition, the media reports from this summer are consistent with CPSC's annual reports in showing that young children and toddlers are especially vulnerable to drowning— at least 100 of the 137 children who drowned were younger than five. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children one to four years of age.

"These figures are a strong indication that child drownings are a serious public health problem," CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum said. "We are losing too many children to drowning, tragically cutting short these young lives and leaving families devastated. While summer is ending, our vigilance in ensuring that all children pool safely must not end. With so many indoor community pools, hotel pools and spas, indoor waterparks, as well as outdoor pools that remain open in warm-weather states, we must continue our efforts to remind everyone to pool safely whenever they are near the water."

Not every child drowning is reported on or tracked by the media. In turn, it takes time for CPSC to compile data of all child drownings from around the country. Each May, CPSC releases reports for drownings and non-fatal submersions for children younger than 15 years of age. CPSC data from 2007 to 2009 shows an annual average of 243 children drowned in pools or spas during the summer months, which is about 63 percent of the average annual drowning figures for these years.

CPSC's *Pool Safely* campaign message reinforces the important safety steps: stay close to children in the water, be alert, and watch children in and around the pool at all times.

During the summer of 2012, the following twelve states suffered the largest number of pool and spa drownings for children younger than 15:

1. Texas (17)
2. California (10)
7. Florida (6)
8. Illinois (6)

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| 3. Ohio (9) | 9. North Carolina (6) |
| 4. Arizona (8) | 10. Alabama (5) |
| 5. Michigan (8) | 11. Georgia (5) |
| 6. Pennsylvania (7) | 12. New York (5) |

CPSC's 2012 submersion report shows on average 390 pool or spa-related drownings occur each year for children younger than 15, based on statistics from 2007-2009. About 5,200 pool or spa-related emergency department-treated submersion injuries occur on average each year for children younger than 15.

The *Pool Safely* campaign provides information on the simple steps that parents, caregivers and pool owners should take to ensure that children and adults stay safe around pools and spas:

- Stay close, be alert and watch children in and around the pool. Never leave children unattended in a pool or spa; always watch children closely around all bodies of water; teach children basic water safety tips; and keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings.
- Learn and practice water safety skills. Every family member should know how to swim. Learn how to perform CPR on both children and adults.
- Have appropriate equipment for your pool or spa. This includes pool fencing, a lockable safety cover for spas, proper drain covers to avoid entrapments, and lifesaving equipment such as life rings and a reaching pole.

The *Pool Safely* campaign was launched in 2010 to raise awareness about pool and spa safety, as mandated by the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. This year, the campaign is increasing its focus on populations most at risk of drowning, including children younger than five years old who represent 75 percent of child drowning fatalities on average, and African American and Hispanic children between the ages of 5 and 14 who drown at higher rates than white children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from USA Swimming indicates that 70 percent of African American children and 62 percent of Hispanic children cannot swim, making them especially vulnerable to drowning.

About *Pool Safely*:

The *Pool Safely* campaign is CPSC's national public education and information program to reduce child drownings, near-drowning and entrapment incidents in swimming pools and spas. The campaign resulted from the requirements of Section 1407 of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (P&SS Act), federal legislation signed into law in 2007, which mandated new requirements for pool and spa safety. Parents, caregivers and the media are encouraged to visit PoolSafely.gov for vital safety information regarding the prevention of child submersions in and around pools and spas.