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NEWS RELEASE

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Memorial Day Weekend Marks the Opening of Area Pools

Typically, the Memorial Day weekend is the time when area pools open their gates to the young and old alike. Although swimming pools can be a tremendous source of enjoyment, they can also be dangerous. In fact, swimming pools are so dangerous that 300 children under age five die and 2,000 more children under age five visit hospital emergency rooms for submersion injuries every year. The Anne Arundel County Fire Department offers the following pool safety tips for everyone to follow.

- ❖ Ensure that there is an approved fence/barrier completely surrounding the pool. If the house is a part of the barrier, the exterior doors leading to the pool area should be protected with an alarm. The fence is at least 4 feet high, no foot or handholds, with no diamond-shaped openings larger than 1 3/4 inches. Fences using vertical slats should have slats spaced less than 4 inches apart to prevent a child from squeezing through.
- ❖ Gates in the fence are self-closing, self-latching and the mechanism is out of the reach of children. Pool gates should never be propped open for any reason.
- ❖ Steps or ladders leading to an above ground pool are secured, locked or removed when the pool is not in use.
- ❖ Pool covers are always completely removed when the pool is in use; standing water is always removed from the cover.
- ❖ Young children are never left alone in or around a pool, not even for a moment. An adult always supervises them. And the adults that supervise children are instructed and familiar with potential hazards, both common and unique to the pool. Never rely on flotation devices or swimming lessons to take the place of adult supervision.

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- ❖ A telephone is at poolside, with emergency numbers posted near the phone.
- ❖ Parents, guardians and babysitters who know CPR need not wait for emergency personnel and should institute CPR or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately.
- ❖ Diving is only permitted from the end of the diving board, not the side or shallow ends, and the diver should steer up immediately after entering the water. Diving is never allowed into an above-ground pool because it is too shallow.
- ❖ People using poolside sliding boards always slide feet first, avoiding the risk of suffering head and neck injuries from striking the bottom of the pool head first.
- ❖ Remove toys and flotation devices from pool when not in use, these objects are often attractive to non-swimmers.
- ❖ Consumption of Alcohol and swimming /diving is not a good combination. Be safe: *Don't drink and dive.*

County Executive John R. Leopold asks, that everyone spread the word on pool safety with the goal of reducing this summer's pool related injuries and deaths.

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