

Pool and Spa Safety Ambassador Kit

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)



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Introduction

Drowning is a leading cause of death in children under the age of five. These deaths are preventable as are the thousands of emergency room visits that result from non-fatal drowning each year. Getting clear, concise and actionable information into the hands of parents, caregivers and pool owners is a critical step in reducing the number of pool- and spa-related deaths and injuries in the United States.

We invite you to learn more about how you can help. This document is your guide to getting involved in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) campaign to help prevent child drowning.

Campaign Overview

The CPSC is implementing pool and spa safety campaign designed to reduce child drownings and pool-related incidents including drain entrapments. The campaign is a key part of the CPSC's efforts to carry out the requirements of Section 1407 of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, federal legislation which mandates new requirements for pool and spa safety including a national education campaign to support compliance and raise awareness about pool and spa safety.

Our challenge is to convince consumers to add proven safety steps to what they are already doing when it comes to protecting their kids around pools and spas. But we recognize that the public is already bombarded with personal safety and health messages. Therefore, this campaign will focus on practical, easy tips to enhance enjoyment and sense of well-being around pools while inviting people to share their own experiences and best practices.

The Pool and Spa Safety Ambassador

We have created this Ambassador Kit to help you leverage the national campaign in your own activities. It provides guidance on generating media coverage of drowning prevention steps, responding to local drowning or non-fatal drowning incidents and engaging local officials.

Campaign Implementation

The CPSC campaign will be publicly launched at the start of the 2010 swimming season and sustained throughout the summer and into the fall. With your help and engagement, we will ensure that the campaign's critical message continues to reach the public into 2011 and beyond.

The campaign will be focused on achieving one specific goal: reducing the number of deaths caused by drownings and drain entrapments in the United States. To achieve this, CPSC will provide information and resources to targeted stakeholders that will raise awareness of how to prevent drowning and entrapment deaths.



Resources that we will create for use by Campaign Ambassadors and other stakeholders include:

- Broadcast public service announcement (PSA) in English and Spanish
- Radio PSA in English and Spanish
- Print PSA in English and Spanish
- Transit and billboard PSA materials
- Educational video for parents and children
- Online pool and spa safety game for parents and children
- Informational brochures, flyers and door hangers
- Consumer-targeted giveaways items such as posters, stickers, temporary tattoos and sunglasses

The campaign will rely on a digital advertising campaign using both the Google AdWords Search Network and Facebook ads to drive consumers to the PoolSafety.gov Web site. The Web site, which is being redesigned for a re-launch in the third quarter of 2010, will be integrated with the campaign's earned media and social media engagement efforts.

Campaign Timeline

Development of the CPSC campaign began in January 2010 and will continue through its launch before Memorial Day 2010. Once it has been publicly launched, there are a number of opportunities throughout the swimming season and beyond for Campaign Ambassadors to use its resources in their own outreach activities.

May

The CPSC campaign will publicly launch in late May at an event at the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. While the event will be promoted through a national earned media push and other outreach, we encourage Campaign Ambassadors to use the launch event as an opportunity to reach their communities with drowning prevention messages.

Suggestions for launch-related outreach in May include:

- Distribute your own press release noting national campaign launch and what your organization is doing in your area
- Include information about the national campaign in your newsletters, email blasts and other communications you distribute
- Join the national campaign's social network on Twitter and Facebook and share news about the launch with your own networks
- Post photos and commentary about your outreach in the national campaign's social network

May is also National Water Safety Month (NWSM), a joint effort of the Association of Pool and Spa Professional (APSP), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the World Waterpark Association (WWA), the Independent Pool & Spa Service Association (IPSSA) and the International Swimming Hall of Fame. It is also the traditional start of the swimming season, as most outdoor pools open around the Memorial Day holiday.



Suggestions for campaign non-launch related outreach in May include:

- Plan a NWSM event in your community (see event planning guidance)
- Ask local public pools to post NWSM materials at their facilities (available online at <http://www.watersafetymonth.org/>)
- Retweet CPSC water safety tips issued on each of the 31 days of May
- Become a fan of NWSM on Facebook
- Contact local media to suggest they include drowning prevention tips in their coverage of the start of the swimming season (see pitching local media guidance)
- Submit a letter-to-the-editor on NWSM (see submitting a letter-to-the-editor guidance)

Please note that we want to hear from you about how you are reaching your community with the drowning prevention message. Instructions for sharing your success with us will be distributed via the CPSC pool and spa safety listserv. Just go to <http://www.poolsafety.gov/signup.aspx> to sign up.

June

June is the end of the school year for many students and the start of the summer camp season. It is also Home Safety Month and National Safety Month. The CPSC campaign will debut new drowning prevention public service announcements (PSAs). On June 3, 2010, a group of water safety organizations are planning to conduct the World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL) with the goal to have it recognized as such by the Guinness Book of World Records.

Suggestions for campaign outreach in June include:

- Ask aquatics camps in your area to post CPSC campaign drowning prevention materials on their Web sites
- Promote the release of the CPSC campaign's PSAs
 - Post the PSAs on your Web site and distribute to your networks
 - Ask local hospitals and doctors' offices to include the PSA on their closed circuit television programming
 - Ask your local media to use the PSAs
 - Tweet about the PSAs and share them with your online social networks
- Work with a public pool in your community to participate in the WLSL on June 3
- Contact local media to suggest they cover the WLSL

July

July is the halfway point of the swimming season and the Fourth of July holiday provides an opportunity to reinforce water safety and drowning prevention messages. A variety of collateral materials will be released in support of the CPSC campaign in July, including a new online game for children and parents and an educational video.



Suggestions for campaign outreach in July include:

- Promote the online game for children and parents on your Web site
 - Use Web assets that will be provided to link to the online game from your Web site
 - Tweet about the online game and share it with your online social networks
- Ask pediatricians in your area to include CPSC campaign brochures and flyers in their waiting rooms
- Post the educational video to your Web site
- Distribute a press release with local and national statistics on the number of drowning deaths and challenge your community to improve over the second half of the swimming season (see writing and distributing a press release guidance)

August

August is the beginning of the school year for many elementary school students. The CPSC campaign will conduct a “back to school” themed announcement in August to draw attention to the importance of pool and spa safety at home and after school (when many children may be unsupervised).

Suggestions for campaign outreach in August include:

- Ask local outdoor pools that will be closing for the season around Labor Day to post CPSC campaign information about year-round drowning prevention efforts in their facilities
- Share your outreach efforts with the CPSC campaign with us using the links found on PoolSafety.gov
- Include a link to the “back to school” information on your Web site and share the information with you contacts at local school districts
- Participate in a town hall meeting hosted by your Member of Congress during the Congressional recess and provide an update on your efforts on drowning prevention
- Contact local media to suggest they remind the public of the need for year-round drowning prevention efforts in their coverage of the end of the swimming season

September

The Labor Day holiday in early September is the traditional end of the swimming season. By September, all major CPSC campaign activities will have taken place. There will be a final campaign event in September at a year-round swimming facility that will be used to remind the public that drowning can occur at any time. Pool and spa safety should be practiced every day, all year, at every pool and spa.

Suggestions for campaign outreach in September include:

- Download the complete suite of CPSC campaign materials from PoolSafety.gov
- Contact local school districts to ask that they invite you to address a school assembly and/or PTA meeting on the CPSC campaign
- Tweet about the CPSC event at a year-round swimming facility
- Contact local pool service businesses to suggest they use the materials and toolkit



- Submit a letter-to-the-editor providing a report card of your community's swimming season drowning prevention efforts and results

Accessing Campaign Resources

All CPSC campaign resources will be available on PoolSafety.gov. We encourage you to subscribe to the CPSC listserv to be kept abreast of campaign developments and new resources as they become available.

Once the redesigned Web site has been launched, you will also be able to share your efforts with others. We will have a Flickr page for you to post photos of events and the CPSC campaign materials being used in your community. In addition, the Web site will feature descriptions of your outreach and activities when you share them with us.



Appendix

Event Planning¹

Events provide an avenue to attract attention to an issue and present an opportunity to build, solidify and cultivate relationships with your community. Target audiences for events you may plan around drowning prevention and water safety can include parents, caregivers, educators, first responders, the media, community-based organizations, local government officials and community leaders. Below please find some event planning guidance.

Planning Team

Begin by creating a planning team that has an interest in child safety and drowning prevention. Once you have the team identified, you should get together to answer specific questions:

- What are the goals/objectives of the event?
 - What do you want members of your community to get out of participating in the event?
- Who is the target audience?
- What resources are available?
 - Do you have a budget or do you need to raise funds to hold the event?
 - Are staff members or volunteers available to plan and work the event?
 - Can you access in-kind services, such as pro bono public relations services?
 - Do you have a resource for acquiring free giveaways?
 - Should you partner with other organizations to leverage existing resources?
- What type of event do you want to hold?
 - Seminar, health fair, luncheon, walk/run, performance, press conference?
- Where should the event be held and when?
 - Will this event be held outside/inside? Do you need to reserve space? If so, what type of space? Are permits required for this type of event? How many people should it accommodate?

Event Timeline

An event planning timeline can track who is responsible for what tasks and when tasks need to be completed. Developing a timeline with specific milestones and due dates should be one of the first tasks for the event planning team. It should include logistics, partnership development, publicity and program/agenda.

Promoting the Event

Getting your target audience to attend the event is directly tied to how well you promote the event. You will want to use every means you have to get the word out through both the media and community channels. Partners and other community organizations can be effective in using their own networks to help you with

¹ Event planning section is adapted from “Protect the Ones You Love: Event Planning Guide,” a primer on planning and holding community events to raise awareness about preventing child injury, which was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.



promotion. The media, including radio, television and newspapers offer many opportunities for promoting your event.

You should ask partner and interested organizations to help you by:

- Displaying announcements of the event
- Including notices about the event in their newsletters and Web sites
- Handing out/displaying promotional brochures at their workplaces and businesses
- Helping you pay for advertising, if necessary
- Making announcements/handing out promotional notices at community and faith-based meetings and other gatherings
- Encouraging participation in the event by employees/clients/customers

Event Day

When your planning is complete and the event day has arrived, you should:

- Arrive at the venue early enough to ensure that it is set up properly and that all equipment is working
- Use a checklist to ensure that all tasks are complete
- Ensure that everyone working the event has an agenda and knows where they need to be and what is going on at all times
- Use a designated person to handle all questions from media, participants and volunteers; for large events, consider having an information booth

For more detailed event planning guidance, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/Event_Planning.html.

Proactive Media Outreach

Raising awareness of your community's efforts around drowning prevention can be enhanced through media coverage. Here are some helpful hints for getting the media interested in this important issue:

- Develop and refine a set of core messages. These messages are the focus of the story you want to publicize and may include the toll that child drownings take on a family and a community, and what parents and others should do to prevent these tragedies.
- Develop talking points for a phone pitch and/or a standardized email pitch. Having what you want to say in front of you while you are pitching makes communicating your ideas much easier.
- Know your story. Talk through what you want to say with a friend or coworker before you get on the phone.
- Look for ways to customize your pitches. Each reporter has areas of expertise and interest. Research previous reports and writings as a way to appeal to what he or she is prone to focus on and emphasize that angle in your pitch.
- Be conversational, affable and accommodating when pitching. A good relationship may help get your story in line for publication or airing.



- Be persistent and resilient. It's okay if a reporter is not initially interested in your pitch or have time to talk to you. Ask if you can call again at a better time or if it would be better to pitch a different reporter.

Cultivating Relationships with Local Media

Local reporters are pulled in many directions. They have many different issues to learn about and report on. They also have many different individuals pitching stories to them on a regular basis. Here are some tips to consider to develop a working relationship with your local media:

- Make yourself known. Identify those reporters, columnists and editors who have an interest in children's safety and related issues. Contact them and make sure they know you are a "go-to" person on drowning prevention.
- Check in with your contacts on occasion. Find out if there is anything you can do to help them with a current or future story. Journalists need a steady flow of story ideas and angles. Make yourself a resource.
- Communicate in a professional and effective way. Understand how a contact prefers to be reached (phone, email, etc.) and use that preferred channel of communication.
- Journalists are people, too. Keep your conversations friendly and professional, but talk about things other than your pitch on occasion. Maybe you have something in common that will make for a better all-around relationship.
- Aim to be an asset for your contact. Offer to send information or graphics files, conduct research, arrange meetings and interviews, etc.

Media Lists

A successful media development effort has good organization at its foundation. The chief way of accomplishing this is by keeping your media contact listings in a well planned, structured and easy-to-access media list. Some tips for developing your media list include:

- Keep your list separated by media type. Have one list for print reporters, bloggers, broadcast producers, wire reporters, etc.
- Do your research to establish who the reporters are who cover your issue. You can determine who has covered similar topics in the past by researching previous articles/stories by the reporter.
- Create a useful list that includes the following information:
 - Name of publication, outlet or station
 - Names of relevant editors, reporters, news directors, etc. (try to have more than one contact at each outlet)
 - Mailing address
 - Telephone, fax number and email for the media outlets as well as for each individual contact on your list
 - Any important editorial information such as style guidelines, deadlines, etc.
- Polish and edit list as you make pitch calls. Your media list is a living document that will constantly change.



- Alert your local “events” calendar section, including print and broadcast media, to help publicize an upcoming event or campaign activity.

Lobbying Editorial Writers

With editorial page writers, it’s all business. They are responsible for the content and issues-framing of their newspaper. It’s a big responsibility and their time is at a premium. For these reasons, it is especially important to approach them posed and prepared. A few key ways to make the most of an opportunity to lobby them to take an interest in drowning prevention include:

- Issues that impact the region and readership are a priority with editorial writers. Consider child drowning and the elements of the CPSC campaign. How can you present it to showcase a regional angle and impact on the local populace?
- Preparation will be very important, expect a brief but informative conversation and tough questions. Talking points will be very useful in ensuring the conversation stays on track and the messages you want to relay are reinforced.
- Have some reliable statistics available to illustrate your issue. Quantifiable facts will be of greater interest to editorial page writers than broad statements and anecdotal information.
- Make yourself a trusted and known quantity. Follow-up on communications quickly. Furnish information immediately. Be the point person for developing a piece and expediting it through your communications approval process (if applicable).

Writing and Submitting a Letter-to-the-Editor

A letter-to-the-editor written to local and regional newspapers and magazines offers the opportunity to communicate your message when the media has missed or overlooked your story. They are often written as a means to respond to a recent article, clarify facts, offer an alternative view, etc. Tips for writing and submitting a letter include:

- Check the submission specifications of the newspaper or magazine. Generally, two short paragraphs are ideal. You also must include your name, affiliation and contact information.
- Use the publication’s online comment feature in addition to submitting a letter for publication.
- Look at the letters that appear in the publication. Is a certain type of letter usually printed? Try to fit your letters into a style and form that are regularly published.
- Know what you want to accomplish by submitting your letter. Have a position and a point of view. State it clearly, ideally in the first sentence.
- Make your letter timely. If you are not responding to a specific article, editorial or letter that recently appeared in the publication, then try to tie the issue you want to write about to a recent or upcoming event.
- Consider who should sign the letter. Many times it may be more effective to have someone with local name recognition sign the letter.
- Keep your comments at a high level. Never make an accusation against individuals or organizations, and always avoid lodging blanket attacks on the media, in general, or the newspaper, in particular.



Writing and Distributing a Press Release

Distributing a press release to your local media contacts is an effective way to let reporters know about an event or issue. A few tips on how to draft your release and get it into the hands of interested media are as follows:

- Present your information quickly, clearly and succinctly.
- Local media like a story with local appeal. Make sure that the release pertains to the outlet's audience that you are trying to reach.
- Follow a simple writing style. The style of the news release takes the form of an inverted pyramid. It begins with a lead, expands on the lead and proceeds to present the information in decreasing order of importance.
- Work on the headline. Editors often just glance at press releases which is why your headline is important. Media outlets receive countless releases, so it is important to try to grab attention with a short, catchy, pithy opener.
- Don't bury your lead. A good summary lead should follow the headline. It should answer the key questions – who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Include a quote. A short, substantive quotation from a key individual written into the third paragraph is standard.
- Keep it short and to the point. Don't try to include too much. A standard press release should be kept to one page if possible.
- Provide a contact name, email and phone number.
- Make sure your release is news. A release has a finite amount of time to be relevant. Follow up with your contacts ASAP.

Drafting and Submitting an Opinion Article

An opinion article, or op-ed, is a commentary article submitted to the opinion-editorial page of a local or regional newspaper. Traditionally, the op-ed is a short essay from a recognized individual that offers an opinion on a recent issue of interest or educates about a topic of public concern. Tips for coordinating the development and placement of an op-ed are as follows:

- Name recognition is important. Select an authoritative and recognizable person to sign the op-ed.
- Know the rules. An op-ed should be under 750 words. Check the publication's Web site or call the newsroom to confirm maximum word count.
- Smart pieces get published. The op-ed should convey a sense of urgency and motivate the reader to take action. Take the time to craft a great article.
- Stick to the facts. Arguments should be factual and well-researched.
- Consider the audience. Submissions should be authoritative but not aggressive or divisive. This is an opportunity to persuade a large audience to take action.
- Think local. As a communications piece, the op-ed will need to appeal to some element of local impact or significance.
- Write carefully. Avoid clichés and jargon. Clarity is of the utmost importance.
- Identify the author. Include a short blurb on the author's credentials at the end of the piece. Be mindful that this is the chance to sell your spokesperson. Briefly demonstrate why this person is a worthy commentator.



- Provide contact information. Op-ed submissions always require the author's direct contact information.

Selecting Spokespeople

Name recognition is important and who you select as your media spokesperson can be just as important as what they say. Reporters are more likely to pay attention when the speaker is a known quantity. A few guidelines on spokesperson selection include:

- A spokesperson should be in a position of authority or consequence. A community leader or a relevant third-party advocate are both good choices.
- Choose someone in the know. A spokesperson should be familiar with the issues and able to advocate effectively.
- Public communications experience is a plus. A spokesperson should be comfortable fielding questions that may be challenging or probing.
- Message train. A spokesperson should be prepped or "media trained" on the messages that are most important to the issue. A solid message discipline is key to a clear and professional media experience.

Media Training

A briefing or interview with a member of the media is a chance to speak to a large audience in one sitting. It is important to deliver clear, message-driven responses. The following tips can help prepare your spokesperson for his or her role as message-deliverer:

- Create a message discipline...and stick to it. An interview is not the time to speak off the cuff. Think ahead. Prepare notes. Be prepared for any contingency or situation by preparing talking points and key messages.
- Keep it simple and direct. Effective messages are polished and concisely stated.
- Practice makes perfect. Dealing with reporters is a skill that takes practice. A friend or colleague should test the spokesperson by asking both soft and tough questions.
- Bridge to the message. A spokesperson should answer each question but also take advantage of the opportunity to bridge back to his or her key messages.
- Body language speaks volumes. When speaking to the media, your spokesperson should not fidget or look around the room, but rather be focused and direct.

Talking Point Development

Developing a set of crisp talking points is key to preparing for public speaking and media interview opportunities. Talking points are guideposts to stay focused on during the course of a presentation, press conference or interview. A few helpful tips for developing talking points include:

- Determine your messages. Your messages should tell a story and leave an impression with your audience. They should support your objective and persuade your audience to take action.



- Prepare for tough questions. It is impossible to avoid tough questions but they are easier to answer when you have anticipated them. Make sure that you have thought about possible questions and prepared responses that stick to your messages.
- Have examples to illustrate your points. You should be able to support your messages with statistics and examples.
- Stay the course. Talking points are meant to keep a spokesperson grounded and on-point. Be aware of your message discipline and avoid getting sidetracked into unrelated subjects you are not prepared to discuss.

Creating a Media Kit

A media kit is a set of informative materials designed to communicate your messages to the media. The presentation and contents of a media kit can vary depending on the opportunity or event, but frequently consist of the following elements:

- A press release/media advisory
- Fact sheet(s)
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Testimonials
- Relevant case studies
- Biographical information on spokespeople or leadership
- Headshots of spokespeople/leadership
- Prepared statistical data relevant to the topic
- Copies of previous speeches or presentations
- Brochures or newsletters

A kit is usually presented in a two-pocket folder, though the type of media effort itself will dictate the presentation that will work best. A descriptive label on the front of the folder will distinguish your materials from other press events or organizations.

General guidelines for developing a press kit include:

- Materials should be concise, compelling and on-point.
- The media kit cover and content materials should be graphically appealing and easy to read.
- An agenda or itinerary of the event can often be a useful inclusion in the media kit.
- Kits should be distributed prior to an event and made available at a registration desk.

Responding to Media Inquiries

As the CPSC campaign is launched, it is possible that media in your community will contact your organization to find out more about the campaign and your organization's involvement in it. Responding to incoming media inquiries is arguably one of the most important aspects of media relations. Requests vary in nature and importance. Some reporters will be seeking information for a story with an immediate deadline while others are working on a longer lead time.



It is important to keep the following points in mind when dealing with an incoming call from a member of the media:

- Get all of the information. Whether the incoming request is a call, voicemail or email, make sure to secure all of the information. Examples of information needed include:
 - Who is calling
 - What outlet are they calling from
 - If you are not familiar with the reporter, what do they cover
 - What is the reporter's contact information (phone and email)
 - What information are they requesting
 - When is their deadline
 - Why are they requesting this information and how does your organization fit into the story
- Triage the request. Once you have all the basic information, you can prioritize the call and provide an appropriate response. Regardless of the apparent level of importance, you should never disregard a reporter's call. A simple note back saying you are securing the information requested will let the reporter know that you are not ignoring the request.
 - Level one, crisis situation. Secure all of the information you can, including questions, and let the reporter know you will get back to him or her shortly. Refer to your own organization's crisis plan. It is important not to provide any information in a crisis that has not been reviewed.
 - Level two, reporters on deadline. Identify reporter needs and determine whether you will be able to respond in the time allotted. Make sure to capture all the necessary information and remember to let the reporter know whether you will or will not be able to coordinate an interview or information in the time allotted.
 - Level three, reporters not on deadline. Identify reporter needs and determine whether you will be able to comply with the request. Make sure to capture all necessary information and provide the reporter with a timeframe in which you hope to respond.
- Information gathering. Once you have a clear understanding of what the reporter is looking for and the timeframe in which it is needed, the next step is to determine whether it is possible to comply with the request for information/interview and gather the information/resources to do so.
- Prepare. Be sure to refer to the message development and media training guidelines to prepare your spokesperson as needed.
- Respond. Once you've gathered the needed information and identified and prepared your spokesperson, respond to the reporter accordingly. It may help to provide the reporter with pictures or other information, if possible and appropriate (depends on situation).
- Follow-up. If there are no plans to publish the story immediately, follow-up once to see when the story will be published.
- Publication. Once the story is published, distribute a copy to interested parties as necessary and within legal copyright guidelines.