

Clark County Health District  
625 Shadow Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
(702) 385-1291

## News Release

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Contact: Jennifer Sizemore  
(702) 383-1225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Constant supervision of children stressed this holiday weekend**

(Las Vegas, Nev. – July 3, 2001) – In Clark County this year there have been 28 near drowning accidents and 4 fatalities. According to child injury prevention experts this is one of the leading causes of accidental death in southern Nevada.

Drowning is sometimes called the “Silent Death” because there is often no cry for help and very little sound from splashing. Dr. Donald S. Kwalick, chief health officer for the Clark County Health District states, “The message is simple – an accident can happen in the time that it takes to answer the telephone. Constant supervision by an adult is key to preventing these tragedies.”

The majority of these accidents happen when one or both parents are at home to supervise their children, and the victim was last seen in the house or away from the pool area. A tragic death is not the only consequence of a drowning incident. Of children surviving near-drownings, 20 percent requiring hospitalization suffer severe and permanent disability.

The facts show that the majority of drowning deaths occur in the family pool, but any amount of standing water can pose a hazard. The most common drowning victim is three years of age or younger. The abilities of toddlers change on a daily basis and it is important to ensure that there is not a lapse in supervision.

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In addition to supervision, experts recommend “layers of protection.” A non-climbable five-foot fence that separates a pool or spa from the residence should be installed and openings should not be more than four inches wide so children cannot squeeze through the spaces. Gates should be self-latching and never left unlocked. Other recommended precautions include pool safety covers, CPR training, and rescue equipment.

The Clark County Health District stress that these precautions are recommended to help prevent accidents, and should not be used as a substitute for constant supervision.

For more information about drowning prevention contact the Clark County Health District at (702) 383-1217.

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