



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: August 4, 2009

09-067

DOH CONDUCTS RESIDENTIAL POOL SAFETY SURVEY

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health's (DOH) Injury Prevention Program in partnership with the Swimming Pool Association of Hawaii (SPAHA) will be conducting a survey of private pool owners beginning in August to determine safety issues and concerns centered around home swimming pools and spas.

"It's so important for pool and spa owners to take a serious look at safety issues around their residential pools," said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Fukino. "A few easy fixes can make your pool at home so much safer, especially for young children."

Each year in the U.S. nearly 300 children under the age of five drown in residential and public pools and spas. Other victims of pool accidents number in the thousands, often require emergency room treatment or hospitalization, and may suffer permanent disabilities including brain damage.

In December 2008, a federal law was enacted that mandated commercial or public pools and spas to upgrade their drains and pumps for safety. Private or home pools are not required to make these improvements. However, for the safety of swimming pool users especially children, the DOH and SPAHA are beginning the ground work for a federally funded campaign in conjunction with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to educate pool owners about this and other important safety issues.

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The goal of the campaign will be to reduce the number of childhood injuries and deaths associated with residential pools. The DOH and SPAH partnership will survey approximately 1,380 swimming pool and spa owners and clients of SPAH. Surveys will be enclosed in monthly billing statements which are mailed directly to pool owners who are encouraged to complete the survey. The brief voluntary survey features just five questions. Survey results will help to guide local swimming pool safety education efforts. All information will be kept confidential.

SPAH Association members will take an active role in helping to locate swimming pools that may have flawed fencing or unsafe elements and possible drains and/or pumps that may be dangerous to children. Pool owners will be urged to voluntarily bring their pool or spa up to commercial code for safety.

SPAH is comprised of 25 member swimming pool and spa maintenance companies and eight associate members whose work involves pool equipment, chemical, supply and/or pool construction.

For more information on pool safety go to www.poolsafety.gov

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