

# LEGAL BULLETIN

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## SUMMER SAFETY

By Emily Hawk Raley

It is that time of year again when we all take time to bask in the sunshine and seek ways to cool off and relax. The American Red Cross and the American Academy of Pediatrics have provided tips to keep you and your family safe. Here are a few of those tips.

### **Sun Safety**

- \*Always drink plenty of water
- \*Take frequent breaks when working or playing in the hot weather.
- \*Plan your outdoor activities during the cooler time of the day.
- \*Wear sunscreen.

### **Water Safety**

- \* LEARN TO SWIM
- \* Even good swimmers need buddies. Never swim alone.
- \* A lifeguard or another adult (preferably one who knows about water rescue) need to be watching children at all times.
- \* Make sure your child knows never to dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and has checked for underwater objects.
- \* Never let your child swim in canals or any fast-moving water.
- \* Ocean swimming should be allowed only when a lifeguard is on duty.
- \* Younger children should be closely supervised while in the water - use "touch supervision," keeping no more than an arm's length away.
- \* Swim in supervised areas only.
- \* Obey all rules and posted signs.
- \* Don't mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.

### **Pool Safety**

- \* Never leave children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- \* Install a fence at least four-feet high around all four sides of the pool. The fence should not have openings or protrusions that a young child could use to get over, under, or through the fence.

- \* Make sure pool gates open out from the pool, and self-close and self-latch at a height children can't reach.
- \* Keep rescue equipment (a shepherd's hook - a long pole with a hook on the end - and life preserver) and a portable telephone near the pool.
- \* Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children a false sense of security.
- \* Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be within arm's length, providing "touch supervision."

### **Boating Safety**

- \* Be weather wise:  
Sudden wind shifts, lightning flashes and choppy water all can mean a storm is brewing. Bring a portable radio to check weather reports.
- \* Bring extra gear you may need:  
A flashlight, extra batteries, matches, a map of where you are, flares, suntan lotion, first aid kit, extra sunglasses. Put those that need to be protected in a watertight pouch or a container that floats.
- \* Tell someone where you are going, who is with you, and how long you'll be away.
- \* Then check your boat, equipment, boat balance, engine and fuel supply before leaving.

### **Playground Safety**

- \* Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface under and around the play equipment. Use at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high. If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high.
- \* Carefully maintain all equipment. Open "s" hooks or protruding bolt ends can be hazardous.
- \* Swing seats should be made of soft materials such as rubber, plastic or canvas.
- \* Make sure children cannot reach any moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part.
- \* Never attach-or allow children to attach-ropes, jump ropes, leashes, or similar items to play equipment; children can strangle on them.
- \* Make sure metal slides are cool to prevent children's legs from getting burned.
- \* Parents should supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe.

### **Bicycle Safety**

- \* Take your child with you when you shop for the bike, so that he or she can try it out. The value of a properly fitting bike far outweighs the value of surprising your child with a new bike.
- \* Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- \* Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths, not

just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride your bike, put on your helmet.

- \* When purchasing a helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard.

- \* A helmet protects your child from serious injury, and should always be worn. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.

- \* A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. The strap should be securely fastened, and you should not be able to move the helmet in any direction. If needed, helmet sizing pads can help improve the fit.

### **Lawn Mower Safety**

- \* Try to use a mower with a control that stops the mower from moving forward if the handle is let go.

- \* Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.

- \* Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower wear hearing and eye protection.

- \* Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.

- \* Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.

- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers.

(Sources: American Red Cross, American Academy of Pediatrics)

We at CKRKM hope you all have a safe and fun summer!!

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Emily Hawk Raley is a native of Gadsden. She can be reached at the number below or by email at: [hawk@alabamatortlaw.com](mailto:hawk@alabamatortlaw.com)

Cusimano, Keener, Roberts, Kimberley & Miles, P.C.  
153 South Ninth Street  
Gadsden, Alabama 35901  
(256) 543-0400  
Fax: (256) 543-0488