



METTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Summer Safety Guide

Memorial Day is the day we honor all Americans who have died in all wars. Memorial Day is a day of remembering the men and women who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. As a marker it typically marks the start of the summer vacation season.

School is out and it is time for family, friends and FUN! This is the time for outdoor cookouts, pool parties, visits to the lake or beach and backyard play. It is not the time for bandaging scrapes, nursing burns, or even worse.

This time two years ago a very close family friend of mine was killed in a tubing accident as she was enjoying a family outing on Lake Lanier in North Georgia. She was tubing with two others when they all fell off into the path of an oncoming boat. While the driver of the boat swerved to miss one of the children he could not see and struck her. She was only 15 years old

Learn these important summer safety tips and make sure everyone in your family knows them by heart too. That way, it will be a summer to remember, for all the right reasons.

Pool Safety

1. **Supervise constantly:** Good supervision means you are able to scan the pool area every 20 seconds and be able to reach the pool in 10 seconds.
2. **Put multiple safety barriers between children and the pool:** Install a four-foot fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate that has a locking mechanism beyond a child's reach. Also cut overhanging tree limbs and remove chairs or ladders from the pool area to prevent children from climbing over the fence surrounding the pool.
3. **Always check the pool first if a child is missing:** A child drowning is often a silent death that alerts no one with splashes or yells for help. Many drowning accidents happen when children have been missing for less than five minutes.
4. **Empty small wading pools and remove all toys after children are through playing:** Infants can drown in just a few inches of water. Floats, balls and other toys may attract children to the pool when it is unattended.

Open Water Safety (Lakes, Rivers and Oceans)

1. **Look before you leap:** Parents and children should only dive head first into areas that are clearly marked for diving. Even if you're familiar with a lake or river, the conditions underwater tend to change, so go for a swim before your kids to make sure it's safe. When you dive in, make sure you're extending your arms over your head to protect your head just in case.
2. **Keep an eye on the temperature:** Your children might be fine in cold water depending on other factors, such as the wind, or whether it's sunny or cloudy out. Adults need to watch children for signs that the water temperature is too low.



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Look for shivering, a bluish tinge to the skin or an apathetic mood. At the extreme, swimming in too-cold water can lead to hypothermia. If you're swimming in the ocean, consider outfitting the kids in wet suits, which help retain body heat.

3. **Be mindful of your surroundings:** Aquatic life usually does not pose a danger to your children, but you should keep an eye out for potentially dangerous conditions such as large patches of vegetation on the water surface. Kids could potentially get tangled in these patches and attract the interest of animal predators. Also avoid areas where birds are on the water eating fish; predatory animals often hover around areas where food is nearby.
4. **Beware of the undertow:** Talk to your children about how to react if they get caught in an undertow or rip current. The key is to stay calm and since currents are strong but not very wide, swimming parallel to the shore, across the current, is the best way to come out of it. Teaching them to tread water while they call for help is another good safety measure.
5. **Keep a watchful eye:** As tempting as it may be to relax on the beach while your little ones swim, don't rely on flotation devices like water wings or rafts to keep your children safe. You should be swimming with them until they are strong enough to go it alone. If an inexperienced swimmer, both children and adults, too, should be wearing an approved personal flotation device or PFD (lifejacket, life preserver, Mae West, life vest, life saver, cork jacket, life belt, flotation suit, etc.) The PFD is designed to assist the wearer, either conscious or unconscious, to keep afloat with his or her mouth and nose (airway) of his or her head's face above the water surface when in or on water. A PFD should be worn at all times when skiing, tubing, or boating. If kids are on flotation devices, such as tubes, be prepared to assist them in the event they fall off.
6. **Watch for other boaters and swimmers:** When swimming in open water, avoid swimming in boat routes such as channels. Always wear swimsuits of contrasting or bright colors and wear a PFD. If operating a boat, everybody on board should keep an eye out for stray swimmers and/or fallen skiers or tubers. They are often very hard to see from a boat.

Backyard Safety

1. **Keep grills at least 10 feet from any structure:** Grilling mishaps cause more than 8,300 fires and send 3,000 people to the emergency room each year. Never grill indoors or near garages or porches, even if it's raining.
2. **Have a spray bottle or fire extinguisher handy:** An unexpected flare up can burn more than your burgers. Use a spray bottle to avoid flare ups and have a fire extinguisher nearby. Also, coals get hot. In some cases coals can reach 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Always dispose of charcoal away from kids and pets and cool it down with a hose.
3. **Never use gasoline or kerosene to light a charcoal fire:** Both can cause an explosion. When grilling, use insulated, flame-retardant mitts and long-handled barbecue tongs and utensils to handle food and coals.
4. **Check gas grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes and leaks:** If the tank valve or grill needs repair, do not attempt to do it yourself. Take it to your local home improvement store or qualified appliance repair person.



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5. **Inspect outdoor decorative lights carefully:** Some families add backyard ambience with outdoor decorative lighting. Do not connect more than three midget light string sets together. Light strings with screw-in bulbs should have a maximum of 50 bulbs connected together. Be sure to use light strings bearing the UL Mark, which means UL has tested samples of the product for risk of fire, electric shock and other hazards.

Playground Safety

1. **Carefully inspect backyard playground equipment:** According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 70 percent of all playground-related deaths occur on home playground equipment. Make sure equipment is anchored safely in the ground, all equipment pieces are in good working order, S-hooks are entirely closed and bolts are not protruding. For more information on playground safety contact national Program for Playground Safety at www.uni.edu/playground.

The Metter Police Department would like to recognize all veterans and service members of the United States Armed Forces and offer a very special thank you to the families of our fallen heroes as we observe Memorial Day 2012. We also want to remind everyone to have a safe and happy summer season.

If you need emergency police assistance, please call 911. For routine or general information please call 685-5437 or visit us at www.metterpd.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis S. Nelson".

Dennis S. Nelson
Chief of Police