



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICIALS ADDRESS POOL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR SUMMER

Uniontown, PA – As Fayette County residents relax poolside this summer, officials hope families will keep safety in mind.

Sarah Harvey, Fayette County Director of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, said pool owners should be familiar with Pennsylvania’s Uniform Construction Code (UCC), implemented in 2004.

“I do not want any child to wander off and have easy access to a pool with the potential to drown,” Harvey said, adding she hears about accidental drownings each year that could have been prevented.

Harvey cited the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Drowning Prevention website, which can be accessed at www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts/index.html. According to the CDC, drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4, behind birth defects.

Harvey and county UCC Administrator Paul Pato, who currently performs inspections for 21 municipalities, aim to quell local drowning statistics by upholding permit and building code requirements.

“The building code currently utilized for pools is the 2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code,” Harvey said. “It states that the construction of all in-ground pools, as well as the installation of any pool - including storable pools - more than 24 inches in depth, must be permitted and meet certain requirements.”

Some of those requirements include:

- Above-ground pools under 4 ft. deep must have a fence with a locking gate.
- Above-ground pools over 4 ft. deep do not require a fence, but must have a removable ladder or ladder that lifts and locks. Harvey said citizens should “remove their ladder or always have it in a locked position,” when the pool is not in use.
- Fences on above- or in-ground pools must be a minimum of 4 ft. high with a self-latching and self-closing gate of a sturdy material. Harvey said fences may be installed around the pool area or the entire property, as long as they are not made of materials that encourage climbing.
- The release for the latch must be at least 54 inches above the ground, or at least 3 inches below the top of the gate.
- Gates must swing away from the pool area, as it is harder for children to pull gates, as opposed to using their body weight to push gates.
- In-ground pools with direct access from a dwelling - such as the back door opening onto a deck - should have an alarm on the door that sounds for at least 30 seconds each time it’s opened and is audible throughout the home.
- Dwellings without said door alarms should be equipped with pool power safety covers, compliant with the appropriate codes.

“There are a ton of building codes for pools. These are the minimum requirements for all Fayette County municipalities. Some municipalities have stricter requirements,” Harvey said. “Each scenario is different and other codes may apply to you.”

Harvey also said enrolling children in swimming lessons and teaching proper pool safety at a young age can also help reduce drowning incidents significantly. Area organizations offering open swim sessions include:

- **Franklin Township Community Park** - The pool is open from noon to 8 p.m. daily all summer. Cost to swim is \$10 per person. Swimmers age 4 and younger are admitted free. The facility is located at 115 Warchol Road in Vanderbilt. Call 724-529-0318 for more information.
- **Nancy's Swim Spa** - Owner Nancy Koller offers water aerobics and water arthritis classes, in addition to private swimming lessons. Lessons are \$35 for one hour, and Koller said swimmers typically require only one or two lessons. The facility is open 8 to 11 a.m. Monday through Thursday and 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; and located at 428 N. Pittsburgh St. in Connellsville. Call 724-628-0173 for more information.
- **Uniontown YMCA** - The pool is open from 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. Open swim may be limited or prohibited during pool-related activities, such as aqua aerobics. Pool access is included in membership. The facility is located at 1 YMCA Lane in Uniontown. Call 724-438-2584 for more information, including non-member fees.

To learn more about Fayette County’s pool safety regulations, contact Pato at 724-430-1210, ext. 4306.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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