

Keep family and friends safe in your backyard pool

Got the Card? You're ON GUARD!

Bradford West Gwillimbury, ON (June 4, 2018) – Backyard pools can provide many hours of summer fun, but can also be dangerous. Most child drownings take place in a swimming pool when a caregiver is not paying attention, even if only for a second.

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury is once again promoting backyard pool safety through the Lifesaving Society's "ON GUARD" program, which helps caregivers understand their role when supervising around the pool. This is the second year in which the Town's Building and Leisure groups are teaming up to distribute the card to homeowners building new pools and those with existing pools.

The ON GUARD card is worn on a lanyard around the neck by the designated supervisor. On the back of the card are simple tips including staying within arms' reach of children, ensuring there are enough supervisors to watch all swimmers, and enforcing life jacket use.

"The person wearing the card is responsible for committing 100% of their attention to their role as supervisor, and for finding another adult to relieve them if they need to turn their attention away for even the shortest amount of time," says Teresa Taylor, Aquatic Supervisor. "Drowning can occur in as little as 10 seconds, which means when you're the person on duty you don't answer the phone, don't tend the barbeque, and even if you're having a conversation with someone else, you don't take your eyes off the pool."

Willy Wong, Chief Building Official for the Town of BWG, adds that homeowners also need to ensure safety when the pool is not in use. The Town's by-law requires homeowners to obtain a permit and to build a fence around pools, hot tubs and spas. The fence should enclose the pool on all four sides, have a single, self-locking gate, and be built such that it cannot be climbed over or under. For an added level of security, when inside the house, doors should be kept locked to keep children and pets from slipping outside.

Residents who apply for a swimming pool enclosure permit through the Building division will receive an ON GUARD package with their permit. Those who already have a pool can go to www.bwgleisurecentre.ca to request a package be sent by mail.

Lifesaving Society courses can teach drowning prevention strategies, techniques for rescuing yourself and others, and basic first aid. Contact the BWG Leisure Centre for more information.

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