

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **PSC: Washington, D.C. Public Pools Safest in Country** Council Designates D.C. “Capital of Pool Safety”

WASHINGTON, DC – May 21, 2009 – With District of Columbia Mayor Adrian M. Fenty in attendance, the Pool Safety Council (PSC) today recognized the public pools in Washington, D.C. as the safest municipally-managed public pools in the country. The District has gone above and beyond the requirements of a life-saving new federal pool safety standard by installing multiple layers of protective equipment in all of the city’s twenty-four pools to eliminate the risk of entrapment drowning death or injury.

The D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation Aquatics Division began implementing a plan to update pool drains in 2008. In addition to these modifications at each aquatic facility, District pools have received a donation of SVRS devices from the Pool Safety Council, with equipment provided by Vac-Alert and Stingl and installation services from American Pool Enterprises of Owings Mills, Maryland. Work will be completed in advance of the traditional Memorial Day start of the swimming season. At that time, all of the District’s municipal pools will not only meet, but exceed the federal requirements outlined in the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act.

The Pool and Spa Safety Act, which went into effect in December 2008, was named after former Secretary of State James Baker’s granddaughter, who died after becoming entrapped in a spa drain. The law requires all public pools and spas take relatively simple measures to prevent drain entrapment from occurring.

“We’re proud to recognize the District of Columbia today as the capital of pool safety,” said Danielle Kazmier, Executive Director of the Pool Safety Council. “The District has demonstrated that it is serious about not only embracing, but exceeding new federal pool safety requirements to prevent accidental drowning and entrapment. The District’s efforts and urgency serve as a model for other jurisdictions working to implement this life-saving law.”

The Pool Safety Council also recognized DPR’s pools as the safest municipally-managed public pools in the country, as the District and DPR has gone above and beyond the requirements of a life-saving new federal pool safety standard by installing multiple layers of protective equipment in all of the city’s twenty-four pools to eliminate the risk of entrapment drowning death or injury.

The Consumer Products Safety Commission reports that an estimated 2,300 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for pool submersion injuries in 2004. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental

death among children ages one to 14. According to Safe Kids USA, approximately 280 children younger than five drown each year in swimming pools, while thousands more are treated in emergency rooms for near-drowning each year. When a swimmer becomes stuck to a drain or suction outlet in a swimming pool, spa, wading pool, or hot tub, the force of the filtration system can be overpowering. It is called entrapment; when the supercharged suction from insufficiently covered drains pins the swimmer underwater. The pressure is so powerful that even strong swimmers can't escape, and would-be rescuers are unable to free them.

The Pool Safety Council has worked closely with a number of state officials nationwide to ensure the distribution of accurate guidance to ensure that the life-saving law can be both implemented and enforced.

PSC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of child drowning nationwide. For additional information, including guidance on Pool and Spa Safety Act guidance requirements, please visit our website at: [www.poolafetycouncil.org](http://www.poolafetycouncil.org).