



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

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## **Governor Rell Launches Summer Safety Campaign to Educate Families on Water, Window Safety**

*Innovative Collaboration Involves DCF, DEP*

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that two state agencies with major roles in protecting and encouraging the health and wellbeing of youngsters – the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – have launched an innovative effort to help keep children safe this summer.

“This is a great season to be a child and a wonderful time of year for families to spend time together,” Governor Rell said. “To help make certain Connecticut’s children enjoy a safe and happy summer, DCF developed an advertising campaign, a Web site and a program of free swim lessons under theme of ‘Have a Safe Summer.’ Now DEP is expanding the swimming lessons to a number of state parks.

“Through the work of these two agencies we are demonstrating our commitment to the youngsters of Connecticut and doing all we can to help families prevent tragedies that can result from falls from windows, drowning and other summertime accidents that can be prevented,” the Governor said.

Joined by Acting DCF Commissioner Susan I. Hamilton and DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy for a press conference at Stratton Brook State Park in Simsbury, Governor Rell said families can now find comprehensive summer safety information at a brand new Web site: [www.haveasafesummer.com](http://www.haveasafesummer.com). The Governor said this site is being promoted through a radio and newspaper advertising campaign that is already under way.

In addition, DCF and DEP have worked with the YMCA to fund free swim lessons at 11 YMCAs and six state parks across the state. Details on these lessons, which will serve approximately 2,500 youngsters, are available at the Web site. State parks where lessons will be offered include: Stratton Brook in Simsbury; Squantz Pond, New

Fairfield; Sherwood Island, Westport; Silver Sands, Milford; Rocky Neck, East Lyme; and Burr Pond, Torrington.

“This innovative effort shows just how effectively we can serve the people of this state when we think ‘outside the box’ and harness the energies of state agencies that have mutual interests,” Governor Rell said. “I thank want to thank Acting Commissioner Hamilton, Commissioner McCarthy and their staffs for taking this approach and for their determination to keep Connecticut’s youngsters safe this summer.”

Commissioner Hamilton said, “This campaign helps us fulfill a critical role: helping parents gain access to information they need to keep their children safe and well cared for. Accidents happen – but they don’t have to happen if parents have the right information and provide the right supervision.

“Raising children is complicated,” Commissioner Hamilton added. “But there are simple things that every parent can do that can make a huge difference. So if we can make it easy to access useful information on timely topics, we can help parents be even better parents for their children.”

Commissioner McCarthy said, “The DEP is working hard to get families back outside and to reconnect youngsters with the outdoors. We want everyone to be comfortable and safe when they are outside. Information provided through the ‘Safe Summer’ campaign will help accomplish that and we are pleased to be a partner with the Governor and DCF in supporting it.

“When it comes to the safety of youngsters, DEP has a very special interest in water safety,” Commissioner McCarthy said. “We operate 21 state parks with beaches and oversee state lands with dozens of ponds, lakes and streams. Youngsters need to understand what it means to be safe in the water and they need to know how to swim. The free lessons being support by DCF and DEP – at YMCAs and state parks across the state – will help accomplish that objective.”

### **Background on Window and Water Safety Accidents**

Each year serious injuries and fatalities occur as the result of swimming accidents or falls from a window. In Connecticut, the Office of the Child Advocate and the Child Fatality Review Panel reports that 55 children under the age of 18 drowned in a seven year period ending September 30, 2006. Just last month a teenage boy drowned in the Connecticut River. Nationally, 4,700 children age 14 and under are treated in hospital emergency departments after falling from a window. In Connecticut, five children fell from a window in April and May alone. Fortunately, all the children who fell from a window this spring survived.

These accidents can be avoided if parents closely supervise their children and take simple precautions.

For water safety, parents are reminded:

- Never let a child swim alone and never leave a child unattended;
- Lock pool areas when no one is home;
- Learn CPR and rescue techniques; and
- Enroll your child in swim lessons if you can.

For window safety, parents are reminded:

- Teach children not to play near windows;
- Move furniture away from windows;
- Keep window blind chords out of the reach of children; and
- Use window guards and locks.