

NYS Temporary Commission to Prevent Childhood Drowning

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The New York State Temporary Commission for the Prevention of Childhood Drowning Looks Forward to a Safer 2025

The New York State Temporary Commission for the Prevention of Childhood Drowning is excited to embark on a promising 2025, with a continued commitment to increasing water safety awareness and reducing childhood drowning incidents across the state.

Key Statistics from the CDC and Total Aquatic Programming, LLC:¹

- Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4.
- It is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 5-14.
- The annual age-adjusted drowning death rate in the U.S. from 2018-2021 was 1.31 deaths per 100,000 people.
- New York State averages 0.74 deaths per 100,000 people.
- From July 2008-July 2023, NYS ranked fourth in the number of drowning incidents

About the Commission:

Established in December 2021, following the passage of bill A.7734/S.7129 introduced by Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato and Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, and signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul, the Commission is dedicated to addressing the rise in childhood drownings. The Commission's mission includes evaluating and creating educational programs for children and caregivers about water safety protocols. This involves consulting with experts, collaborating within committees, and conducting public meetings and town halls to gather input and raise awareness.

Legislative Highlights:

- **December 2021:** Senate Bill S7129, creates a temporary "commission to prevent childhood drowning"²
- **May 2023:** Assembly Resolution No. 394 memorialized Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2023 as Water Safety Awareness Month in New York State.³
- **October 2023:** Assembly Bill A4987A established a video on the dangers of drowning for infants and young children, to be viewed by parents of newborns.⁴
- **January 2024:** Governor Hochul unveiled the 'NY SWIMS' initiative, a statewide investment in swimming.⁵

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data-research/index.html>; <https://totalaquatic.llc/monthly-drowning-reports>

² <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S7129>

³ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/K394>

⁴ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/A4987/amendment/A>

⁵ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-unveils-fourth-proposal-2024-state-state-ny-swims-new-york-statewide>

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- **May 2024:** Memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 15, 2024, as Water Safety Day in New York State.⁶

Commission Intentions:

- Preliminary recommendations for water safety education starting ages, aligned with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.
- Support for the continuation and expansion of infrastructure funding initiated by the NY SWIMS program.
- Exploration of incentives to increase water safety education.
- Development of a comprehensive plan for government, private, and public collaborations.
- Creation of the New York State Office of Water Safety Education.
- Awareness campaign recommendations to enhance water safety and drowning prevention.

Upcoming Events:

- The New York State Temporary Commission for the Prevention of Childhood Drowning will announce the Empire State Water Safety Summit, bringing together aquatic professionals and government officials to support water safety awareness.

Water Safety Awareness Reminders:

- Water Safety is a year-round concern and there are always actions that can be taken to reduce water-related accidents.
 - One month of formal swim lessons, can reduce the risk of drowning in children by 88%⁷.
 - Follow the **NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Ice Safety** guidelines.⁸
 - Pool Dangers and Drowning Prevention-When Its Not Swimming Time⁹
 - May 15 is NYS Water Safety Day¹⁰
 - June 26, 2025, World's Largest Swim Lesson¹¹
 - July 25, 2025, World Drowning Prevention Day¹²

The Commission wishes everyone a safe and healthy 2025 and encourages all to participate in water safety education and support efforts to reduce water-related injuries across the state.

For more information about the NYS Temporary Commission to Prevent Childhood Drowning, visit our website: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/temporary-commission-prevent-childhood-drowning>

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⁶ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/K2182>

⁷ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/381058>

⁸ <https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ice-safety>

⁹ <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Pool-Dangers-Drowning-Prevention-When-Not-Swimming-Time.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/K2182>

¹¹ https://www.wsl.org/WLSL/WLSL/Event_Talking_Points.aspx?hkey=effa3363-02ca-4446-b0dd-6646c0e7b8b0

¹² <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-drowning-prevention-day>