

Drowning Prevention Tips

Help Promote Drowning Prevention In Your Community!

On Tuesday, July 27th Canada will mark National Drowning Prevention Day. With children out of school and many families planning summer activities in and around the water, July is the perfect time to discuss water safety with your family. From 1991 to 2000, drowning was the fourth most common cause of death by unintentional injury, and the leading cause of death associated with recreational activities. Among those at highest risk for drowning are toddlers (age 1 to 4 years), youth (age 15 to 19 years), and recreational fishermen.

While tragic, most drownings are entirely preventable. You can help to keep your family safe by knowing the risks, recognizing the hazards, and keeping a few simple safety tips in mind.

Infants and Toddlers

Young children have an amazing ability to sneak out of the watchful supervision of parents. Remember, drowning occurs silently, and it only takes a few minutes for a child to drown. An infant or toddler can drown in as little as five centimetres of water, so parents should be alert of bathtubs, toilets, wash pails and wading pools as well as lakes, ditches and swimming pools.

- Never leave children unattended in a bathtub or wading pool.
- Be sure to keep the bathroom doors closed.
- Turn all wash pails upside down after use.
- Silence means trouble. If you can't hear your child, investigate.
- Remember, seconds count. If a child goes missing, check your pool/spa/tub first.
- Never underestimate the ability of a child to get past protective barriers

Pool Owners

As a pool owner, it is your responsibility to take all of the necessary steps to ensure the safety of your children and guests in your pool area.

- Erect a child-resistant barrier around your pool such as a high fence or wall.
- Ensure that all gates are self-closing and that latches are out of reach of children.
- Keep objects such as chairs, picnic tables, and large toys away from gates and fences to discourage children from climbing into the pool area.
- Make sure all entrances to the pool area, such as doors, windows and gates can be securely locked.
- Provide constant, undivided supervision of all people in and around the pool.
- Keep a well-stocked first aid kit and first aid manual near the pool, as well as a cordless telephone and a list of emergency contact numbers.
- Make sure you and your family have up-to-date First Aid and CPR training.

Beach Side

Beaches provide different hazards than swimming pools. It is difficult to judge the depth of water, height of waves, and strength of currents from outside the water. Sun glare and water colour also make it difficult to see people and objects beneath the surface.

- Always have an adult check water depth/conditions before allowing children to swim.
- Never dive in an unfamiliar area.
- Provide continuous supervision and conduct frequent head counts.
- Insist on using the buddy system.
- Do not use inflatable toys as personal flotation devices.
- Try to swim near manned lifeguard towers.
- Stay within marked swimming areas.
- Swim only during daylight hours.
- Do not swim when fatigued.

Boating

A large portion of drownings occur as a result of boating accidents. Lifejackets and Personal Flotation Devices are a boater's best friend. Even the best swimmers cannot stay afloat when they are unconscious, so all boaters should wear a properly fitted PFD. In Canada, 71% of boating fatalities occurred when the victim was not properly wearing a flotation device. To avoid boating tragedies, follow these simple rules:

- Never mix alcohol and boating.
- Assess the condition of the boat before setting out on the water.
- Insist that all passengers wear PFDs.
- Sit children low in the boat.
- Avoid sitting on the edges of the boat.
- Avoid standing and moving about in small, open boats.
- Keep a well-stocked first aid kit on board at all times.
- Keep a flashlight, whistle, rope, matches and oars in the boat at all times.
- Plan to dock before dusk.
- Be aware of other marine traffic at all times.

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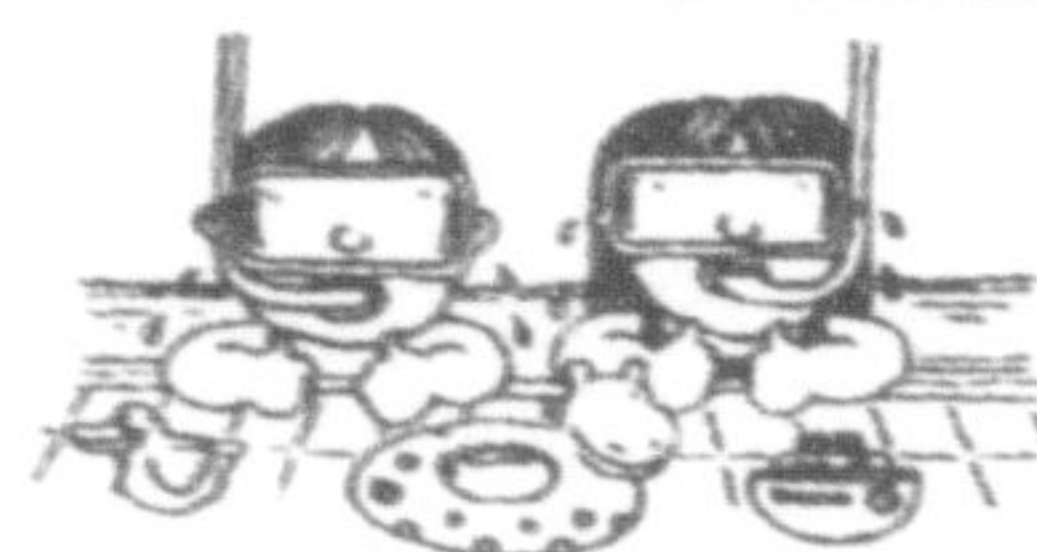
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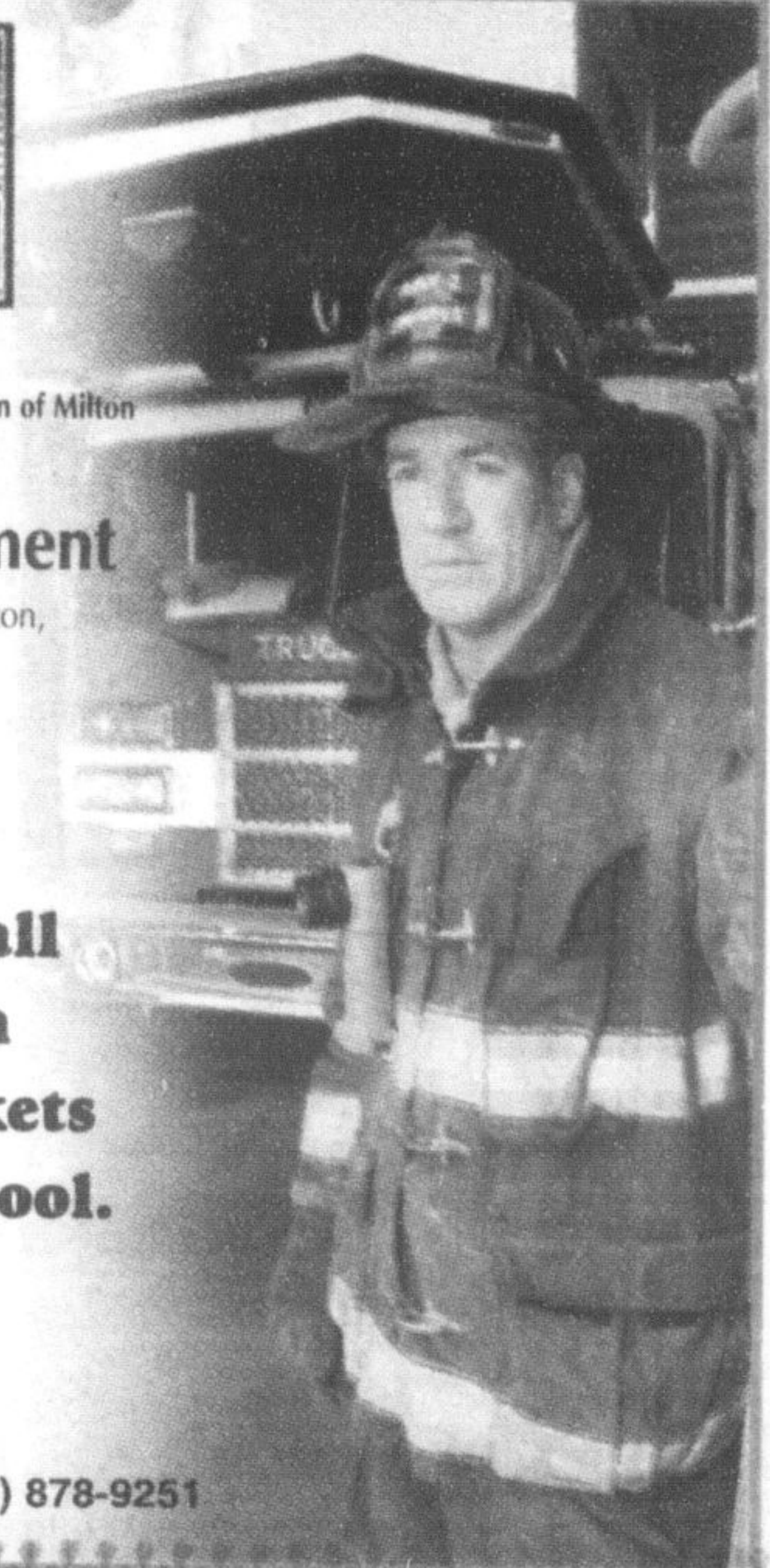


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