



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### USA SWIMMING FOUNDATION AND SAFER 3 WATER SAFETY FOUNDATION JOIN FORCES IN NEW DROWNING PREVENTION EFFORT TO END USE OF MISLEADING SWIMMING TERMS

### ACTIVELY WORK WITH MAYORS, CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS, PARKS & RECREATIONAL DIRECTORS AND FIRE / RESCUE LEADERS FOR SUPPORT IN EFFORT

(COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.), May xx, 2015 — Each summer across the United States, cities and municipalities take action to combat our nation’s drowning epidemic. Their efforts to increase citizen safety and awareness of drowning risk are to be commended, to reverse the US’s standing as the 4<sup>th</sup> highest drowning rate in the world. Approximately 3,500 Americans die each year in drowning incidents – approximately 10 per day – and almost every single one is preventable.

There is, unfortunately, a false sense of security floating around with the use of the term **‘waterproofing’**. While used subtly and with the proper intent, the phrase may increase risk for uninformed Americans. Because, it is impossible for human beings to be “waterproof” in the water.

The definition of waterproof is *“impervious to water.”* Broken down further, impervious means *“incapable of being injured or impaired.”* As water safety experts, we know there is no such thing as being “waterproof,” just as we know that no human is “incapable of being injured.” We must jointly encourage proactive education and vigilance.

“Our ongoing mission is to pound home the importance of learning to swim and educate the public that no one is ‘water proof,’ ‘drown proof,’ or 100 percent ‘water safe,’” says Debbie Hesse, Executive Director of the USA Swimming Foundation. “Our research shows that child who have formal swimming lessons reduce the risk of drowning by 88%. Drowning can be prevented, but the use of these terms can be misleading and gives parents a false sense of security. The joint effort with USA Swimming Foundation and Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation is a welcomed partnership and we hope to enlist the participation of other organizations and public health agencies to continue the mission of drowning prevention.”

The USA Swimming Foundation and Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation are partners in drowning prevention. The USA Swimming Foundation’s [Make a Splash initiative](#) is a national child-focused water safety campaign, which aims to provide every child in America with the opportunity to learn to swim. The Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation is the “dry land” education framework complement, enhancing what families know about water safety before they hit the beach, pool or boat.

Multiple layers of protection must be in place in order to reduce drowning risk. A water experience can only be made “safer” – never completely “safe.” Parents and caregivers must understand that there is always risk when in, on or around the water. This includes pools, ponds, hot tubs, lakes, streams, rivers, the ocean and more.



Learning to swim is one of the most important actions to drastically reduce the risk that still remains. Only through risk awareness and family-centered education can the water provide a lifetime of “safer” enjoyment.

“We are pleased to join USA Swimming Foundation in this drowning prevention effort,” says Jim Spiers, President of Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation. “The Safer 3 message is more than a laundry list of water safety do’s and don’ts. Our message requires individuals and families to identify their risk before engaging in water-related activities. Water safety needs to be a year-round initiative – the risk exists 12 months a year.”

We jointly call on mayors, city council members, public health officials, parks & recreation professionals and fire/rescue leaders to end the use of terms like “waterproofing.” We understand the noble intentions, but to an already uninformed public, a false sense of security can create even greater unintended drowning risk through ignorance.

USA Swimming Foundation and the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation stand together to help US cities and municipalities increase public knowledge and step closer to a world without drowning.

For more information on USA Swimming Foundation’s Make a Splash initiative and Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation, please visit:

[www.usaswimmingfoundation.org](http://www.usaswimmingfoundation.org)  
[www.safer3.org](http://www.safer3.org)

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