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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross Offers Safety Tips for 4th of July *Simple Steps to Ensure a Safe Holiday Weekend*

[SPOKANE] Washington, July 2, 2009 – Warm days and clear night offer residents a rare opportunity for outdoor family fun including cookouts, swimming and camp fires. Whatever your plans include, the Inland Northwest Chapter of the American Red Cross offers the following tips to keep your family and friends safe this summer:

Water Safety

- Learn to swim and swim well. Adults should practice “reach supervision” which means to be within arm’s length of a child in case an emergency occurs.
- Outfit everyone with the proper gear. Kids – and even adults – who are not strong swimmers or who appear to rely on inflatable toys for safety should use U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) whenever they are in or around the water. Everyone, including strong swimmers, should use an approved PFD when boating or using personal watercrafts.
- Swim in supervised areas only and never swim alone.
- Watch out for the "dangerous too's." Take a break at the point of being too tired, too cold, or too far from safety, too much sun, too little hydration, too much strenuous activity.
- Don't mix alcohol and swimming or boating. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, coordination, and reaction time; affects your swimming and diving skills; and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.

Heat Safety

- Make sure that exposed skin is covered with an appropriate sun block before heading outdoors.
- Keep small children a safe distance from hot barbecue grills and outdoor fireplaces.
- Never let children hold lit fireworks. Even sparklers can be dangerous for young children.
- If a burn occurs – treat it immediately. Use large amounts of water to cool the burned area. DO NOT use ice or ice water other than on small superficial burns; ice causes loss of body heat.
- Apply soaked towels, sheets or other wet cloths to a burned face or other areas that cannot be immersed. Be sure to keep cloths cool by adding more water.

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- Cover the burn using dry, sterile dressings or a clean cloth. Loosely bandage them in place.
- For minor burns and burns with open blisters that do not require medical care, wash the areas with soap and water. Keep it clean. Put on an antibiotic ointment (available from any drug store). Watch for signals of infection.
- Critical burns need immediate medical attention. Call 9-1-1 if a burn victim is having difficulty breathing; more than one part of the body is burned; burns are on the head, neck, hands, feet or genitals; a child or an elderly person has been burned; or chemicals, electricity or explosions have caused burns.

While the above tips can help prevent emergencies, it is important to know what to do if a life threatening situation arises. All caregivers, including grandparents, older siblings and babysitters should be trained in Red Cross first aid and CPR skills.

For more information about summer safety or to sign-up for a Red Cross class, visit www.spokaneredcross.org or contact Megan Snow, Director of Communications, at 509-990-0969.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year, some 500,000 volunteers and 35,000 employees helped victims of over 70,000 disasters; taught lifesaving skills to ten million participants; and helped U.S. service members separated from their families stay connected. Almost four million people gave blood through the Red Cross, the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An average of 90 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work.

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