

The Canadian Red Cross has issued a warning to all parents about the dangers of owning an inflatable swimming pool following the recent tragic drowning of a four-year-old boy in Montreal.

The Red Cross is warning parents to use the same caution and safety measures with inflatable pools as they would with in-ground pools.

"Some of the inflatable pools available on the market today are so large they can take a few hours to fill and even require their own filter," said Lorraine Davies, director of water safety and first aid services for the Red Cross in Ontario, in a news release.

"Supervision and fencing must be a priority to ensure these pools result in summer fun rather than tragedy."

The Red Cross offers the following pool safety tips:

- * Always directly supervise children in, on and around water.
- * Ensure your pool is fully fenced with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- * Check with your local municipality for by-laws regulating backyard pools.
- * When not using the pool, clear all toys out of the water and away from the edge. These can often tempt children to the water's edge or into the pool.
- * Weak or non-swimmers should wear a lifejacket or personal floatation device (PFD) when enjoying water activities.
- * Ensure you have emergency equipment, including a first aid kit as well as a phone in the immediate pool area.
- * Get trained. Ensure you and your children know how to swim and learn water safety by enrolling in the nearest Red Cross swim program at local pools. Taking a Red Cross first aid course will also help immensely in case of an emergency.

"Pools can be a fun and refreshing way to enjoy the hot summer months," said Bridget Erwin, community services co-ordinator for the Red Cross, Sudbury branch. "Taking a few moments to put these safety tips in place can ensure your family's summer is a safe and enjoyable one."

For more information about water safety tips and training, contact Erwin at the Sudbury Red Cross office at 674-0737, ext. 24.