

## JOINT NEWS RELEASE

**Grant County Emergency Management  
Grant County Health District  
Grant County Fire District 5  
Grant County Sheriff's Office**

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### **Caregivers of children offered advice to prevent drownings in irrigation canals**

MOSES LAKE — Grant County public safety agencies are reminding parents and caregivers of children about the risk of children drowning in irrigation canals.

On March 20, a 5-year-old boy drowned after he fell into an irrigation canal between Prosser and Benton City. The risk of irrigation canal drownings is also ever-present in Grant County.

Water is an integral part of the rural landscape used in recreation, agriculture, and sustaining life. However, water attracts young children and each time youth come in contact with water, drowning is possible.

According to the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, drowning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury death among children ages 1-14. It's estimated for each childhood drowning death, about four children are hospitalized for near-drowning.

Drowning rates for all age groups are three times higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. Childhood drowning in rural areas often occurs in non-pool settings, such as lakes, ponds and irrigation canals. Drowning in canals, pits, and ponds is the second-leading cause of childhood agricultural-related deaths. According to the Washington Department of Health, our state's accidental drowning rates are higher than the national rate.

To reduce the risk of children drowning in irrigation canals or other bodies of water, parents and caregivers of children are offered the following advice:

- Instruct children to stay away from irrigation canals
- Provide responsible adult supervision of all children when near bodies of water
- Wear life vests when near any irrigation canal or pond
- Have rescue equipment such as life rings and long ropes available near bodies of water
- Teach children how to swim

For more information on child drowning prevention in rural areas, visit the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety web site at [www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs/](http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nccrahs/).

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