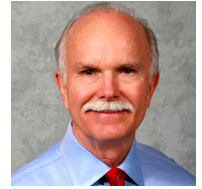


Mills Law Alert

Summer 2019



Summer Camps: **Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Most parents are rightfully concerned about sexual predators in and around their neighborhoods and schools. But those same parents often forget that the same hidden dangers can be present at children's camps across the United States.

More than 14 million youngsters attend some type of camp each year. Yet there are no national regulations for camps to follow. Eight states don't even require that overnight camps be licensed. And 18 states don't require background checks for employees, including counselors.

Unfortunately, there are two types of people who are attracted to children: those who love them, and those who want to molest them.



There are no such things as secrets

Predators often begin their manipulation of a child by telling him or her that "this will be our little secret." For many reasons, children are prone to accept this "our little secret" admonition. Parents can combat this tactic by enforcing a family rule at home that there are "no secrets."

Here are some additional tips that can be helpful to parents before they send their children off to a summer camp:

- Screen the camps. Ask if background checks are completed

on all personnel, and find out what the camp's policy is on sexual abuse training for its staff. Determine who is directly responsible for the camp's rules and regulations. And find out if there are reviews of the camp posted online.

- Educate your child. Use age-appropriate language and make sure they understand that their private parts are off-limits. And be sure they know where to go when and if they feel uncomfortable. Finally, make certain they know that they will never get into trouble for reporting sexual abuse.
- Increase your child's comfort level. If possible, see if they can attend camp with a friend or another child they know, or even a family friend or counselor they know.

Know the Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden reluctance to go back to camp
- Unprecedented depression, isolation, or suicidal thoughts
- Inability to sleep
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Avoiding specific individuals for no specific reason
- Substance abuse

Courtesy Children's Advocacy Center

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Texas Summers

How to be Safe in the Water

For many Texans, in spite of the heat summer means lots of opportunity to be outside. More often than not, one refreshing component of that outdoor activity is water. From rafting to fishing, boating to just hanging out on the beach or around a backyard pool, Texas abounds with an almost infinite variety of lakes, rivers, beaches, and swimming pools.

As inviting as the combination of summer and water can be, it's important that water safety be kept top-of-mind. Consider:

- Every year, hundreds of children drown in swimming pools, and thousands more are treated for pool-related injuries.
- According to the US Coast Guard, 81% of boating deaths in 2017 occurred on boats where the operator had no training.
- The United States Lifesaving

Association estimates that the annual number of casualties due to rip currents on our nation's beaches exceeds 100 deaths each year.

- Alcohol consumption significantly increases the chance of accidental drowning.

A focus on safety should include the following precautions:

- Make sure young children wear life jackets and are actively supervised by an adult.
- Avoid consuming alcohol, especially when operating a vessel of any kind.

- Follow the rules of the beach, lake, or public pool you are visiting.
- Watch for currents and underwater hazards at the beach, as well as defective equipment and unlocked gates at pools
- Check the weather before heading out.



Thanks for the Referrals

Despite the multitude of marketing and communications advancements, the best source for our business is word-of-mouth. We are grateful that so many of our friends and clients feel confident in recommending our firm.

Too often, when a good lawyer is needed, people don't know where to turn. If you or someone you know has been injured and/or needs legal assistance, let us hear from you. We're here to help

Trampolines

Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know

1. Injuries from trampoline accidents can be serious, and include dislocations, broken bones, broken necks, spinal fractures and paralysis, head trauma, and even death.
2. There are approximately 800 trampoline parks in the United States, plus countless trampolines located in backyards across America.
3. As recently as 2014, there were nearly 7,000 emergency room visits attributed to trampoline mishaps.
4. Though most trampoline accidents involve children, adults can also be accident prone while on trampolines.
5. Homeowners should check to be sure their homeowner insurance policies don't include a trampoline exclusion.
6. Children should be supervised at all times when around trampolines.
7. When visiting a trampoline park, ask about the park's safety policies and procedures.
8. A netting should be placed, at ground level, around backyard trampolines.
9. Children should be made aware of the dangers inherent with trampoline stunts.
10. The number of children bouncing at one time on a trampoline should be limited.

Motorcycle Accidents are More Numerous in the Summer

With its bad weather and the prevalence of holiday drinking, winter is the season when most motorcycle accidents occur, right?

Wrong.

Truth is, there are more motorcycle

accidents during the summer. That's because summer's warmer temperatures and mostly rain-free days bring joy-riding cyclists out in droves.

In fact, there were nearly 365,000 motorcycles registered in Texas in 2017. Only five states have more registered

motorcycles: California, Florida, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania. Motorcycles are especially accident-prone for several reasons, not the least of which is they are much smaller than cars and trucks and thus harder to see.

Motorcyclists will find these tips from the Texas Dept. of Transportation useful:

- Always wear a helmet and other protective gear.
- Keep headlights on and drive defensively.
- Avoid the center of the lane, which is where debris and oil tend to build up.
- Ride at a safe speed, and never drink and ride.
- Take a safe riding course.
- Automobile drivers should look twice for motorcyclists at intersections, when entering highways, and when turning or changing lanes.

If you or a loved one were injured in a motorcycle accident because of someone else's negligence, call us today.



A Referral Can Change a Loved One's Life for the Better

There was a time when someone who was injured or needed legal advice would reach for a phone book. Then they would make call after call to an endless list of personal injury law firms, hoping they'd find the right advocate to help them. As times changed, phone books became largely obsolete. Google searches became the fastest, most convenient way to get help.

But nothing provides more confidence than an old-fashioned referral for the right legal help from a trusted friend or family member.

The Mills Law Firm's reputation for responsiveness, supportiveness, concern, empathy and professionalism has helped it develop trusting relationships with its clients. And those relationships last long after a particular case or problem has been resolved. These relationships are the backbone of the Mills practice.

Life is uncertain, and unfortunate situations can and do arise. When a life-changing accident befalls your parent or spouse, son or daughter, nephew or niece, or even a neighbor down the street, refer them to The Mills Law Firm. They will be glad you did.

The Grass is Always Greener

Lawn Mower Accidents and Lawn Care Safety

It is easy to forget just how dangerous mowers and other lawn care equipment can be if we aren't careful. Mowers are responsible for thousands of injuries each year, many of them to children.

Mower injuries can be serious, and are often the result of people being exposed to the mower's whirling, sharp blades. Designed to cut grass, these blades can also cause humans to lose fingers, toes, and even entire limbs. Also common are lacerations, eye injuries, and blunt trauma when debris such as rocks is shot at high speeds out of the mower's discharge chute. Injuries can also occur from contact with exposed engine parts. In addition to mowers, other lawn care equipment – weed eaters, tree trimmers, chainsaws – can be dangerous if not used properly.

When using lawn care equipment, the following should be kept in mind:

- Read all safety instructions carefully.
- Use equipment as it is intended to be used by manufacturer.
- Wear goggles and other safety gear, as needed.
- Keep feet away from sharp blades and avoid wearing open-toed shoes.
- Shut off any equipment that is smoking or leaking hazardous liquids.
- Keep children away from lawn care equipment.....especially mowers.

If you have been injured by a lawn mower or other piece of equipment, the manufacturer and others may be liable. These lawsuits tend to be highly technical, requiring detailed evidence from design and manufacturing experts. Expert testimony will often focus on ways in which the product was incorrectly designed and/or manufactured, how that process could be done differently, and how these and other failures were the cause of the injury.



Actual resolution of legal issues depends upon many factors, including variations of facts and Texas law. This newsletter is not intended to provide legal advice on specific subjects, but rather to provide insight into legal development and issues. The reader should always consult with legal counsel before taking action on matters covered by this newsletter.