



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Laura Phillips Ward | WardComm Public Relations, LLC
860.573.4809 | laura@wardcommpr.com

EVERYDAY HERO CT OFFERS SPRING AND SUMMER RECREATION SAFETY ADVICE

May 10, 2016 | Cromwell, CT – Now that the spring weather has finally arrived, it's time to get outside and get active. In Connecticut, that means exploring the state's various trails and waterways. While it's easy to think of local firefighters as the men and women who rush to the scene of burning buildings and car accidents, volunteer firefighters train to operate search and rescue incidents as well and are frequently called upon when hikers are stranded and boaters and swimmers are missing. With the hope of preventing the need for such rescue missions, the Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment program is sharing some basic trail and waterway safety information.

"Getting outside on a beautiful warm, sunny day for a hike or a day on the water is a great way to spend time with friends and family and make wonderful memories," says Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department Chief Fred Dudek, Everyday Hero CT program manager. "Yet, so often those memories quickly turn sad or even tragic when appropriate planning and proper precautions are ignored."

When it comes to hiking, the American Hiking Society offers advice that falls into three categories:

- **Packing:** The American Hiking Society's website offers a list of [10 essentials](#) when going on a hike – it includes appropriate footwear, a map and compass or GPS, water, food, extra clothing, safety items (fire, light, whistle), first aid kit, knife, sunscreen, and a backpack.
- **Planning:** Before leaving for a hike, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Look at a map before starting out.
- **Stay "Found":** Know how to use maps, compasses, and GPS and pay attention to trails. Should you become lost, make sure others can find you. Don't panic – if you have prepared for your trip, you have everything you need and someone will know to look for you. Don't wander – unless you are in danger, stay put so rescuers can find you.

On waterways, whether swimming or boating, the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) offers the following advice:

- Know how to swim;

- more -

- Designate someone to watch swimmers – this should be an adult who can swim, knows CPR, and isn't going to read, look at devices, or otherwise be distracted;
- Avoid strong currents;
- Wear life jackets;
- Avoid alcohol while swimming, boating, and supervising children;
- Take a formal boating safety course; and
- Know the weather forecast.

Volunteers Needed

Everyday Hero CT is a program dedicated to increasing the number of volunteer firefighters throughout the state. Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they’ll ever have.”

About Everyday Hero CT

A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association](#) (CFCA) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) (IAFC), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a two-year Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce for 15 Connecticut fire departments: Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Department, Cromwell Fire and EMS Department, Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (Salem), Greenwich Fire Department, Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department, Middlefield Volunteer Fire Company, Old Mystic Fire Department, Rocky Hill Fire Department, Somers Fire Department, Stamford Volunteer Firefighters Association, Trumbull Volunteer Fire Services, Westfield Fire Department (Middletown), Windsor Volunteer Fire Department, Wolcott Fire Department. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit www.EverydayHeroCT.org.

###