

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**LIFEGUARD SHORTAGE EXPECTED DUE TO HIGH VISA DENIAL RATES**  
*APSP expects Memorial Day weekend pool & spa opening delays along the Mid-Atlantic*

**(ALEXANDRIA, VA)** - The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) expressed concern today that many commercial pools & spas will be delayed in opening this summer season along the East Coast, especially in the Mid-Atlantic region, due to an unprecedented number of visa denials. Pools that will be impacted are those that supplement their American Lifeguard workforce by recruiting lifeguards internationally through the Summer Work and Travel Exchange Visitor Program. The swimming pool industry's recruitment of overseas lifeguards has grown over the years due to the seasonal labor shortage caused by a variety of factors impacting the availability and interest of Americans pursuing seasonal employment.

"For years now there has been an increasing downward trend of high school and college students applying for summer lifeguard positions," said Jennifer Hatfield, APSP's Director of Government Affairs. "Kids are choosing to focus on educational opportunities that limit their ability to apply for seasonal employment such as lifeguarding. In turn, pool management companies have had to increasingly supplement their lifeguard staff with the Summer Work and Travel Exchange Visitor Program."

The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign students with an opportunity to live and work in the United States during their summer vacation from college or university to experience and be exposed to the people and way of life in the United States. The last step before traveling to the United States is to submit to a personal interview at a U.S. Embassy in their home country. During the interview the consular officer decides whether or not to grant the visa to the applicant.

"This year, for reasons unknown at this time, there has been a surge in visa denials in certain countries, which now will result in many pools in the Mid-Atlantic (where most jurisdictions require lifeguards at all commercial and condo pools) and across the East Coast from opening on time," said APSP President & CEO, Lawrence Caniglia. "Those who are expecting a Memorial Day Holiday by the pool may be waiting a few weeks while companies redouble their effort to recruit and certify quality lifeguards. Anyone looking for a great summer job should consider applying with their local pool management company."

Since 2013, APSP's J-1 Coalition has brought together member companies whose livelihood are dependent on managing community and public pools with reliable and competent workers throughout the season. The coalition has worked with members of the US House and Senate on potential unintended consequences of regulatory changes to the Summer Work and Travel Exchange Visitor Program. As the coalition continues that work, they will also be seeking answers for the recent surge in visa denials.

For more information, contact APSP President & CEO Lawrence Caniglia, JD, CAE at [lcanylia@apsp.org](mailto:lcanylia@apsp.org) or call 703.838.0083 ext. 180.

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### **About APSP**

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) is the world's oldest and largest association representing swimming pool, hot tub, and spa manufacturers, distributors, manufacturers' agents, designers, builders, installers, suppliers, retailers, and service professionals. Dedicated to the growth and development of its members' businesses and to promoting the enjoyment and safety of pools and spas, APSP offers a range of services, from professional development to advancing key legislation and regulation at the federal and local levels, to consumer outreach and public safety. APSP is the only industry organization recognized by the American National Standards Institute to develop and promote national standards for pools, hot tubs, and spas. For more information, visit [APSP.org](http://APSP.org).

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