Boy, 6, drowns aboard Carnival cruise ship

By Arlene Satchell, Sun Sentinel
6:15 p.m. EDT, October 14, 2013

A 6-year-old Central Florida boy drowned in a pool aboard the Carnival Victory while it was at sea during the last leg of a four-day Caribbean cruise, Miami-based Carnival Cruise Lines said in a statement Monday.

The child was at the pool area with other members of his family at the time of the Sunday incident, Carnival said.

All authorities were notified per standard protocol and Miami-Dade police boarded the vessel Monday morning when it returned to PortMiami, Carnival added.

Carnival Victory is based in Miami, where it sails on cruises to the Bahamas and the Caribbean.

According to the Miami-Dade police report, the boy was identified as Qwentyn Hunter of Winter Garden. Hunter was in the pool with his 10-year-old brother when he was seen underwater. While passengers acted quickly to pull him out of the pool, attempts to revive him weren’t successful, the report said.

According to police, the drowning appears to be an accident and foul play is not suspected. An investigation is continuing.

As is common industry practice, Carnival ships do not have lifeguards on duty at their pools, a spokesperson said Monday. "Parental supervision is required for children under 13. In this case, there was a parent present at the
time of the incident.”

Industry watchers like Ross Klein, a Canadian sociologist who runs Cruisejunkie.com, said drownings, especially of children, appear to be “relatively rare” among the deaths that occur aboard cruise ships.

Still, from a safety perspective, he’d support calls for lifeguards to be posted onboard ships, at least one of the pools, Klein said.

The Carnival incident follows another widely-publicized pool-related cruise-ship incident earlier this year.

In March, a 4-year-old boy nearly drowned in a pool aboard Disney Fantasy a few hours before it was set to depart on a seven-day Caribbean cruise from Port Canaveral. There also were no lifeguards on that ship.

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