



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What is the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act?

A: On December 19th, 2007, President Bush signed into law the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. This federal act establishes a swimming pool and spa drain cover standard to prevent suction entrapment hazards.

Q: What is entrapment?

A: Entrapment occurs when a swimmer is trapped by the suction created by the water rushing out of the drain at the bottom of a pool. In some cases, swimmers have been trapped underwater until they drowned and in others, they have suffered serious injuries to various parts of their bodies.

Q: What are the requirements for a public pool or spa in Saint Louis County?

A: All public pools and spas in Saint Louis County are required to have a drain cover that meets 2007 ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards. Drain covers that meet these standards reduce the risk of suction entrapment.

Because drain covers can become broken or deteriorated, all public swimming pools and spas must have at least one of the following in addition to the drain cover stated above:

1. A single outlet (main drain) equipped with an eighteen by twenty-three inches (18" x 23") or larger grate; or
2. A minimum of two outlets (main drains) spaced at least three feet (3') apart; or
3. A single outlet (main drain) protected by a safety vent pipe or a safety vacuum release system; or
4. Another method approved by the Director of the Department of Health (DOH).

Q: What is Saint Louis County's definition of a public pool or spa?

A: A public pool or spa includes all swimming pools, hot tubs/spas and auxiliary structures, except at a single-family residence, intended only for the use of the owner or resident and their guests, baths where the object is the cleansing of the body, the practice of healing under medical supervision, or the practice of religious ritual, unless such baths contain pools or tanks which are used collectively by a number of nonresident individuals.

Q: In Saint Louis County, what is the deadline date to comply?

A: The Saint Louis County Council passed legislation on December 22nd, 2008 the extended the date by which all public pools and spas must be in compliance with the Saint Louis County Water Recreation Facilities Code to **December 31st, 2009**.

Q: Why did Saint Louis County extend the compliance date?

A: Saint Louis County extended the compliance date to grant operators of public pools and spas additional time to comply because the larger drain covers that meet 2007 ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards are not yet available.

Public pools and spas with smaller drain covers that are currently available are encouraged to comply as soon as possible.

Q: Does this extension also apply to the federal Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act?

A: No. All public swimming pools and spas were required to comply with the federal act by December 19th, 2008. Operators are advised to contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission concerning enforcement of this deadline date.

Q: What other methods have been approved by the Director of the Department of Health (DOH)?

A: The Director of DOH has not approved any other methods to date. However, nationally recognized and laboratory-proven methods of compliance will be considered. There are two (2) methods currently being considered for approval:

1. Main drain disablement, when water quality and turnover rates can be met.
2. Unblockable channel drain covers that meet 2007 ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards.

Q: What is the process for making the suction entrapment repair?

- A:
1. Submit a Suction Entrapment Repair Application and the applicable fee.
 2. Obtain approval for your repair plan from DOH.
 3. Complete the repair as stated on your application.
 4. Receive repair approval from the DOH.

Q: What is the applicable fee?

- A:
1. The fee is \$50.00 if the public swimming pool or spa only requires replacement grate(s), covering(s), and/or fitting(s).
 2. The fee is \$150.00 if the public swimming pool or spa requires other entrapment-related modifications to comply.

Q: Can I make the changes to the public swimming pool or spa myself?

A: It is recommended that pool owners/operators needing to make repairs to their existing facilities obtain the services of a pool professional specializing in the design and maintenance of public pools.

Q: Can I operate my public swimming pool or spa after the extended deadline date of December 31st, 2009?

Yes, but only if the public swimming pool or spa is in compliance. Pools not in operation on December 31st, 2009, can reopen once the public swimming pool or spa is in compliance.

Q: Where can I obtain more information?

A: For more information concerning Saint Louis County requirements, please call our office at (314) 615-8900 or log on to our web site at <http://www.stlouisco.com/doh> .

The following websites have additional information that may be useful:

American Association of Pool and Spa Professionals:

<http://www.apsp.org/clientresources/documents/2Summaryof%20P-SSafetyAct.pdf>

<http://www.cpsc.gov/pssa.pdf>

<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/363.pdf>

Consumer Product Safety Commission:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/>

Guide to Compliance

www.cpsc.gov/businfo/poolspa comply.pdf

List of Manufacturers

www.cpsc.gov/businfo/draincman.html

Life Saving Resources Inc.:

<http://www.lifesaving.com/issues/articles/17pool spa entrapment.html>

Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act

www.cpsc.gov/businfo/poolspa.pdf