

Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act

What is it?

A federal law enacted on December 19, 2007 that went into effect December 20, 2008. This law was enacted to make swimming pools safer by requiring the installation of drain covers that comply with a new standard (ANSI/APSP-7) on all new construction of residential pools. It was named after Virginia, a little girl that drowned by becoming entrapped on a "submerged suction outlet" (floor drain).

What can happen?

This law is design to protect swimmers from entanglement, entrapment and evisceration hazards that currently exist in swimming pools.

WARNING: SWIMMERS, ESPECIALLY YOUNG CHILDREN, HAIR, JEWELRY, AND BATHING SUITS CAN BECOME ENTRAPPED OR STUCK ON A NON-CONFORMING DRAIN. THE RESULTING INJURIES CAN BE SERIOUS AND MAY LEAD TO DISFIGUREMENT, DISEMBOWELMENT, DROWNING OR DEATH.

For these reasons, congress enacted the VGB Pool and Spa Safety Act to require compliant drain covers to be installed on new pool construction.

Who is affected?

New Pool Construction

All new construction must comply with all provisions of the VGB Pool and Spa Safety Act (as part of current building code).

Existing Pools

The federal law does not require the installation of compliant drain covers on existing residential pools. This does not mean that your current drain covers are safe! Entrapment and suction injuries occur in residential pools with non-compliant drain covers. Many state and local officials are in the process of incorporating these standards into their codes. Check with your local building inspector for clarification.

Remember - Virginia, the 7 year old child the law was named after, drowned in a residential backyard pool, at a party, with her mother present.

What is our recommendation?

We here at APCO Pools value your safety and the safety of your children and guests.

- We strongly recommend that you install ANSI/APSP-7 compliant drain covers on your existing pool to avoid entrapment and suction injuries.
- We strongly recommend that you not use your pool until the drain covers are installed.
- We also recommend that if your pool has a single bottom drain you should install a safety vacuum release system.

The federal government and governing standard organizations believe these systems should be installed for swimming pools with single main drains. **REMEMBER SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT AND THESE INJURIES ARE SERIOUS AND POTENTIALLY LIFE THREATENING.**

We have incorporated these safety changes and improvements into our own personal pool and advise all of our customers to do the same.

See reverse side for details on available options.

How do I make my pool as safe as possible?

The following options are the most common additions and modifications to comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. Additional devices may be available depending on how and when your pool was built.

Please call for additional information.

New Drain Covers

Should be done to every pool (prior to using) that has a submerged suction outlet (bottom drain).

- The only method to eliminate the risk of entanglement
- Intended for entanglement hazards only (hair, fingers, toes, bathing suits, jewelry)
 - Can be retrofit on any existing drain
 - Still requires entrapment protection (see below)

SVRS Pump

A pump that has electronic sensors to automatically turn the pump off.

- Pays for itself in 3-6 years due to its high efficiency design
- Built in timer and protection from; freeze, overheating, running dry, and blockage damage
- Variable speed (programmable up to 8 speeds) allows running at low speed for high efficiency filtering and pool heating, and high speeds for vacuuming and backwashing and water features
 - Extremely quiet & automatically resettable
- Still requires a new drain cover for entanglement protection

SVRS Vacuum Breaking Device

A vacuum release device that allows air into the system.

- Mechanical device (non electrical)
 - Must be manually reset
- Can be retrofit into any existing system
- Still requires a new drain cover for entanglement protection

Disable or Re-plumb Existing Lines

Includes; bottom drains, wall suction, and vacuum lines

- Eliminates the risk of entrapment due to suction hazard
- Any submerged suction outlet is permanently disabled or re-plumbed to return water into the pool
 - Re-plumbing is preferred over disabling as it allows for better water circulation
 - Still requires a new drain cover for entanglement protection