

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act Information for Homeowners

Cuyahoga County Board of Health • 5550 Venture Drive • Parma, 44130 • (216) 201-2000 • www.ccbh.net



On December 19, 2007, the President signed into law the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, named after the daughter of Nancy Baker and the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker. Graeme Baker died in a tragic incident in June 2002 after the suction from a spa drain entrapped her under the water. The new law is aimed at reducing the number of entrapment-related deaths and injuries by making pools safer, securing the environment around them, and educating consumers and industry on pool safety.

The Act specifies that on or after December 19, 2008, swimming pool and spa drain covers available for purchase in the United States must meet specific performance requirements. Additionally, public swimming pools, wading pools, spas and hot tubs must meet requirements for installation of compliant drain covers. Additionally, in certain instances, public pools and spas must have additional devices or systems designed to prevent suction entrapment.

Additional Resources:

Detailed information about the Act can be found by visiting:

- The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (www.ccbh.net) 216-201-2000
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov)
- The Association of Pool and Spa Professionals (www.apsp.org)
- The National Swimming Pool Foundation (www.nspf.org)
- Aquatics International (www.aquaticsintl.com)



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How does the Act define a “public” pool or spa?

The term is defined broadly and includes:

- Any facility open to the public whether free or for a fee
- Multiple family residential facilities (apartments, condominium complexes, etc.)
- Hotels or other public accommodations
- Facilities operated by the federal government for the military, their dependents, or for any federal agency or department



Anti-vortex drain cover

Does the Act apply to residential pools and spas (hot tubs)?

Homeowners should be aware of this new law. As of December 19, 2008, it will be against federal law to make, import, or sell a drain cover or suction outlet fitting that does not comply with ASME/ANSI A112.19.8-2007. Homeowners are not required to take any action if they do not replace, modify or do any work involving the currently-installed main drain and/or other suction outlet cover. However, any replacement covers purchased and installed after December 19, 2008 must comply with this new standard. All other federal mandates apply only to public facilities.

How will I know which covers comply?

Drain covers should display either the ASME symbol and/or the "ASME/ANSI A112.19.8-2007" mark, or "VGB 2008". There was a period of time when covers were not marked. If there is no mark or you are otherwise in doubt, contact the manufacturer or your supplier and ask for a copy of the certificate.

What is “ASME/ANSI A112.19.8-2007”?

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) are professional, non-profit organizations that assist in the development and maintenance of codes and standards through ongoing research. Membership consists of a wide range of engineers and other professionals from both the public and private sectors. A112.19.8-2007 is the standard that explains the materials, testing methods, and marking requirements for these new drain covers.