

## Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act October 2008

The Federal Pool and Spa Safety Act aka “The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act” applies to all new and existing Public Pools and Spas. This Act goes above and beyond the Federal Pool and Spa Safety act of 2007.

### **The Bill:**

This was enacted to remediate all five suction entrapment hazards: hair entrapment, limb entrapment, body suction entrapment, evisceration / disembowelment and mechanical entrapment.

**On or after 12/19/08 every public pool** will need to have suction fittings and covers that comply with ASME / ANSI 112.19.2007. The pool or spa may also require a vacuum release system in order to comply with the safety act. If the pool or spa in question already complies with ANSI / APSP-7 then it is considered to meet the Act’s requirements. Any pool that is not in compliance may not be open for public use until it is compliant.

This is a Mandatory Federal Requirement. Some pools will only need compliant covers; others will also need to provide safety vacuum release systems or another type of system that will prevent entrapment.

### **What entities will this impact?**

This will apply to Homeowner Associations, Schools, Condo Associations, Fitness Centers, Hotels, YMCA’s, or any other entity that provides a pool for public use.

### **What entities will enforce this?**

At this point it is done on a state by state and county by county decision. There is a grant funding entity in the act for education of inspectors and builders. Check with your local Health and Human Services Department.

The standard covers new and existing facilities. Some of the standard’s key features are:

- The new law defines a SWIMMING POOL; SPA- The term `swimming pool' or `spa' means any outdoor or indoor structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing, including in-ground and above-ground structures, and includes hot tubs, spas, portable spas, and nonportable wading pools.
- The focus of ANSI/APSP-7 is prevention. For this reason, the first option listed in the standard is for no submerged suction. These circulation systems receive water exclusively from skimmers or gutters. Although the exact number is not known, thousands of vinyl lined and fiberglass pools are installed without submerged suction outlets.
- Suction outlet covers/grates must be tested and listed as conforming to ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 2007. The 2007 version of the ASME standard includes for the first time a requirement to test covers with a body block test.
- Warns that the pool or spa be immediately closed to bathers if any cover/grate is found to be damaged or missing.

- New construction must have multiple drains, single unblockable drains, or no drains. For existing pools, the standard specifically allows for the disablement of a single drain. Single blockable drains are not permitted in new construction.
- Added protection must be provided for a single drain on an existing pool. Options include disabling the drain, converting the drain to a return inlet, adding a properly spaced second drain, any safety vacuum release system (SVRS) that complies with ASME/ANSI A112.19.17 or ASTM F2387, suction limiting vent system, gravity drainage system, or automatic shut off switch.
- Limits the flow rate or water velocity. (It is not widely understood that suction is *not* the only or even the greatest entrapment threat--water flowing through covers is responsible for the most reported entrapments. This is important because atmospheric vacuum breaking devices respond only to an increase in suction, which does not occur when there is hair entanglement).
- Provides a detailed checklist to assist the pool professional in identifying entrapment hazards in existing pools and spas and details remedial options

## **Final Standard Text**

### [Title XIV -- Pool and Spa Safety Act](#)

#### **Manufacturers of**

[ASME/ANSI Approved Drain Covers](#) and  
[ASME/ANSI/ASTM Approved Safety Vacuum Release Systems](#)  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/phth/draincman.html>

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