

SAFE TIMES

Federal Pool and Spa Safety Act

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act becomes effective December 19, 2008. In short, the new law is intended to prevent injuries and drowning due to pool drain fittings and covers by making sure that fittings and covers comply with specific safety standards.

As a first step, property managers will need to perform an assessment of their pools and spas to ensure that they are in compliance with the new law. In order to assist you in this task, this document has been developed to answer basic questions. If you are unsure, we encourage you to contact your pool supply vendor.

-As of 12/19/08, all pools and spas must be equipped with certified covers on every suction outlet– drain fitting and cover.

- Every drain in every pool and spa must have a compliant cover by the effective date.

-Hot Tubs are considered “spas” for purposes of this act.

-Certified covers will have the following embossed or permanently marked in a location that is visible when installed



-As of 12/19/08, all pools and spas that have a single outlet, other than an unblockable outlet, must employ one or more of the following additional options:

- Safety vacuum release system (SVRS) that complies with ANSI/ASME A112.19.17 or ASTM F2387; or
- Suction limiting vent system; or
- Gravity drainage system; or
- Automatic pump shut-off; or
- Drain disablement; or
- Equivalent system that may be approved by the CPSC.

The Act defines an unblockable drain as a drain sump of “any size or shape that a human body cannot

sufficiently block to create a suction entrapment issue.

- A skimmer is not considered a suction outlet.

- If a compliant drain cover is not available, the drain will require permanent disablement, or replacement with a cover and mounting frame that is compliant.

- The standard requires ASME approved covers. Non compliant covers and systems should be addressed. If a cover is broken, damaged, not secure or missing, the standard requires that the pool or spa be immediately closed to bathers.

