

Pools are important to many guests, especially families traveling with young children — but they are also an area where safety issues are paramount.

In December, the **Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act** was signed into law, and this new Federal law supercedes all state pool codes. Named after the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker, this law requires all public



to be equipped with anti-entrapment drain covers compliant with ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards. And in an effort to prevent hair entanglement, covers may not have a suction/flow of more than 1.5 cubic ft/sec. If a pool or spa is not currently equipped with a compliant cover, it must be retrofitted by December 18,

2008.

According to the non-profit Pool Safety Consortium, anti-entrapment safety devices are recommended, including:

1. **Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS)** — Ceases operation of pump, reverses the circulation flow, or otherwise provides a vacuum release at a suction outlet when a blockage is detected. It also must meet ASME/ANSI standard 112.19.17 or ASTM International standard F2387. An SVRS can be installed in under an hour for about \$500 - \$700. Representative brands include Vac-Alert Industries, Stingl, Hayward Pool Products, and A.O. Smith Co.
2. **Suction-Limiting Vent System** – While not widely used, these systems introduce air into the suction line thus causing the pump to lose prime and relieve the suction forces at the main drain. The installation of this system will require a rebuild of the pool.
3. **Gravity Drainage System** – These have gained popularity in states such as Florida, and are practical for new pool construction only. This device uses a collector tank with a separate water storage vessel from which the pump draws water. Water moves from the pool to the collector tank due to atmospheric pressure, limiting drain suction forces significantly.
4. **Automatic Pump Shut-Off System** – A device that senses a drain blockage and shuts off the pump system. Some SVRS devices may meet this definition. Currently, there is no industry standard for automatic pump shut-off systems. However, the current SVRS standards provide release and response time of under three seconds.

5. **Other Systems** – Any other system determined by CPSC to be equally effective as, or better than, the systems described above. This will allow the development of future products.

For more information on the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, contact the Pool Safety Consortium at 877-222-4289 or visit their website, www.poolsafetyconsortium.org.