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## **NEW POOL SAFETY RULES**

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### **New pool safety rules**

Swimming pools have always been associated with summertime fun and relaxation for families across the country – until the unthinkable happens.

At a quiet pool in Panorama City, California, young Jessica Balcazar, 11, was enjoying an afternoon of swimming with her friend when she became pinned to the bottom of a hot tub and nearly drowned as a result of suction entrapment. With more children drowning as a result of suction entrapment, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recently released new safety standards for all public pools and spas.

Not all children are as lucky as Jessica Balcazar, who was saved after being underwater for more than 2 minutes by her quick-thinking friend, who promptly turned the spa off. A frightening and often underreported occurrence, suction entrapment can result when a swimmer is “sucked” onto a pool or spa’s powerful water circulation system, much like the way the hose of a vacuum cleaner will stick to a person’s palm. The force of this suction can be tremendous – up to 500 pounds of pressure or more for a main drain with a standard pump! Despite this risk, pools can still be enjoyed safely when the proper safety precautions and devices are in place.

New federal legislation preempts all state laws regulating public pools, and non-complying pools risk fines up to \$1.8 million and could face criminal prosecution.

According to the Pool Safety Consortium, drowning is the second leading cause of death among children ages one to 14. In addition to the basics such as safety fences, pool covers, alarms and drain covers, additional anti-entrapment devices must be added to all public pools and spas. Public pools and spas with a single main drain (other than an unblockable drain) must be equipped at a minimum with one complying anti-entrapment device or system, as well as a drain cover.

