

Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act

The Bakers' Story

On June 15, 2002, Virginia Graeme Baker, granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker, went with her mother and four sisters to a family friend's home for a graduation party. It was held outdoors, and the focal point was the swimming pool and hot tub.

Virginia had worn her swimsuit to the party and jumped into the pool as soon as they arrived. A short time later, Virginia's older sister ran to their mother, Nancy, and said that Virginia was under-water in the hot tub and would not come up. Nancy ran to the hot tub, but could not see her child due to the bubbles obscuring the surface and the dark water.

Nancy jumped into the hot tub and discovered the horrific sight of her daughter's unconscious body on the bottom. Nancy desperately tried to pull her daughter out, but she couldn't move her, and she couldn't understand why she couldn't bring her to the surface. Two adult men at the party came and helped, finally managing to free Virginia and pulling so hard the drain cover broke in the process. Lifesaving efforts were immediately performed on the little girl, but she couldn't be revived.

The sad fact is that Virginia's death along with others could have been prevented, with just a different type of drain cover and/or a safety device.

What does the VGB Act mandate?

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB Act) was signed into federal law on December 19, 2007, and enforcement begin on December 19, 2008.

Public pools and spas that are not in compliance as of December 19, 2008, may not open for use until compliant.

The VGB Act contains three federally enforced mandates.

1. All drain covers (public and residential) manufactured, imported, distributed, or offered into commerce must comply with the new ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 2007 standard.
2. All public pools and spas (new and existing) must be retrofitted with covers that meet the new ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 2007 standard.
3. All public pools and spas that have a single drain other than an unblockable drain must employ one or more additional options.

CALL GOHLKE POOLS TODAY AND SET UP AN APPOINTMENT FOR US TO INSPECT YOUR POOL FOR THIS AND ANY OTHER HAZARDS.

This information was taken from APSP Compliance Guide.

Who should be concerned?

- Anyone who owns or operates a swimming pool or spa.
- If the pool or spa drain covers were installed prior to December of 2008.
- **If your pool or spa is equipped with only a single main drain.**
- If your pool or spa has dual main drains and are located closer than 36 inches.
- If the pool or spa has missing or broken drain covers.

A Few Corrective Actions.

- Consider drain disablement or reversal of the flow.
- Install additional properly spaced outlet(s) with compliant cover(s)
- Install safety vacuum release device (SVRS).
- Install a gravity drainage system.
- Install a suction-limiting vent system.
- Install an automatic pump shut-off system.

Note:

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-Always follow label directions and manufacturer's instructions for each product used.

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