

## SAFETY

# Is That Public Pool Your Kids Swim in Safe?

NewsUSA

(NU) - All around the country, communities, hotels and fitness centers are throwing thousands of dollars into the drain.

That's because a new law went into effect late last year, requiring all public swimming pools and spas to be retrofitted with compliant drain covers to meet enhanced federal safety standards. Drains, which are located on the bottom or side of a pool or spa, supply water to the pump and filter to keep the water clean. But the suction can sometimes be so great that it could cause swimmers, especially children, to become trapped on the drain. Other times, body parts such as fingers and hair or bathing suit material can get caught, resulting in severe injury or drowning.

In 2007, Congress passed the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act – which mandates that all drain covers in public pools be replaced with new compliant covers. In addition, all newly constructed pools, whether public or residential, must now be built using drain covers that meet the new law. The VGB Safety Act also mandates that each pump in a public pool connected to a single blockable drain shall be equipped with a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS) or other approved devices to prevent entrapment by the pool or spa.

However, according to the National Swimming Pool Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to aquatic education, as of early this year, at least 80 percent of the over 300,000 public pools and spas nationwide still do not meet current drain safety standards. Though the Act does not mandate replacing drain covers on existing residential pools, these new designs can also be installed to update residential pools built



**Public pools are scrambling to comply with new federal safety laws.**

prior to the new standard. It is recommended that pool owners contact a pool professional for a safety suction audit. Insist that drain covers be replaced with parts approved by the original manufacturer. Mismatched drains and drain covers can be dangerous.

Companies like Hayward Pool Products are offering various devices that will help owners and operators comply with the law. For its part, Hayward has designed a new SVRS that will monitor changes in a pump's suction line. When a change of vacuum is detected, Hayward's Stratum VRS shuts off power to the pump and vents the suction line to the atmosphere.

There are more than a million backyard pools with a single drain for which SVRS or other means of safety vacuum release are recommended. Have your pool inspected by a pool professional now to ensure that your pool complies with the "layers of protection" recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

For more information, visit [www.nspf.org/Documents/SevenTipsForSaferSwimming.pdf](http://www.nspf.org/Documents/SevenTipsForSaferSwimming.pdf), [www.haywardnet.com/safety/](http://www.haywardnet.com/safety/) and [www.APSP.org](http://www.APSP.org).