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Pool Safety Council, Safe Kids USA Issue Joint Guidance on Pool and Spa Safety Act

WASHINGTON, DC – March 30, 2009 – The Pool Safety Council and Safe Kids USA today released a joint guidance document outlining requirements for public pools and spas to come into compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. The guidance document was developed in an effort to correct inaccurate information circulating about the steps necessary to protect swimmers from the threat of drain entrapment.

The Pool and Spa Safety Act, which went into effect in December 2008, was named after former Secretary of State James Baker's granddaughter, who died after becoming entrapped in a spa drain. The law requires all public pools and spas take relatively simple measures to prevent drain entrapment from occurring.

All public pools must install approved safety drain covers, while single drain public pools must also install approved anti-entrapment devices, such as a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS), an automatic pump shut-off system, a gravity drainage system or a suction-limiting vent system.

The full guidance can be found on the Pool Safety Council's website, www.poolsafetycouncil.org, or by clicking [here](#).

Many early documents issued by municipalities and county officials nationwide caused confusion, were contradictory and misstated the requirements needed in order to comply with the Pool and Spa Safety Act.

Some common myths:

- Single drain public pools are not required to install multiple drains. Rather, federal law only requires that single drain pools install approved anti-entrapment drain covers and use one of the other secondary layers of protection listed above.
- Pools do not need to be drained in order for drain covers to be installed. Initial requirements out of Los Angeles County that its 16,000 public pools be drained in order to replace covers would have led to nearly one billion gallons of wasted water.
- The law does not require public pools install new sumps.

Dual drain pools only need to install approved safety drain covers to comply with the law, but PSC and Safe Kids strongly recommend all pools and spas, even private residential pools and spas, install both approved drain covers and an additional layer of protection.

The Pool Safety Council has worked closely with a number of state officials nationwide to ensure the distribution of accurate guidance to ensure that the life-saving law can be both implemented and enforced.

“Our phones won’t stop ringing with requests for additional information about Virginia Graeme Baker compliance,” said Pool Safety Council spokesman John Procter. “We want to make sure that pool operators have access to accurate and uniform information before they make what could be costly and needless modifications.”

The Pool Safety Council and Safe Kids USA were two of the leading proponents of the creation of the Pool and Spa Safety Act. The Consumer Products Safety Commission reports that an estimated 2,300 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for pool submersion injuries in 2004. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death among children ages one to 14. According to Safe Kids USA, approximately 280 children younger than five drown each year in swimming pools, while thousands more are treated in emergency rooms for near-drowning each year. When a swimmer becomes stuck to a drain or suction outlet in a swimming pool, spa, wading pool, or hot tub, the force of the filtration system can be overpowering. It is called entrapment; when the supercharged suction from insufficiently covered drains pins the swimmer underwater. The pressure is so powerful that even strong swimmers can't escape, and would-be rescuers are unable to free them.

PSC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of child drowning nationwide. For additional information, please visit our website at: www.poolafetycouncil.org.