

# Advocates Hope New Guidelines And ABC News Investigation Motivate Pool Owners To Take Simple Steps Needed To Prevent Suction

A recent ABC News investigation on pool drain safety was reported July 23rd on Good Morning America. This and reports of two near-drownings in the past 60 days in Florida and California demonstrate the need for prevention of suction entrapment accidents in pools and spas.

The Pool Safety Consortium wants everyone to be aware of the simple steps that can be taken to prevent these tragic accidents. Fortunately, the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) recently issued safety guidelines that all public pools and spas must be compliant with by December 20th.

Before then, there is much work to be done.

"The deadline is only months away from going into effect, yet when ABC News and several of its affiliates investigated 23 hotel pools in different areas of the country, they found that 16 were not compliant with the new standards," said Paul Pennington, founding member of the Pool Safety Consortium. "That is why we want to make sure that everyone is aware of the dangers, including the users of public pools and spas. Swimmers and parents need to protect themselves while using any pool or spa."

Suction entrapment is a terrifying occurrence caused when part of a swimmer's body, clothing or hair becomes suctioned to a pool or spa drain. Once a swimmer is attached, the suction force caused by the powerful water circulation system can be incredible - about 500 pounds of force for a standard pump. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for an adult to free an entrapped swimmer, and all too often serious permanent injury or death can occur. Sadly, children can be particularly susceptible to suction entrapment.

The new federal law requires that all public pools or spas with a single main drain - other than an unblockable drain - must be equipped with at least one layer of protection to prevent entrapment by pool or spa drains, such as: safety vacuum release systems (SVRS), suction-limiting vent systems, gravity drainage systems, automatic pump shut-off systems or drain disablement. Some of these systems, particularly suction-limiting vent systems and gravity drainage systems, are only practical for new pool construction. Others, such as SVRS and automatic pump shut-off systems, can be installed on existing pools for a reasonable price.

In addition, the new federal law requires that all public pools and spas be outfitted with safety drain covers that have been tested by an independent third party and found to conform to the 2007 ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards.

"While the new guidelines are only mandated for public pools and spas, we hope that private pool and spa owners will also take these simple precautions. The potential to prevent one suction entrapment accident is well worth the minimal investment in time and money," said Pennington.

Paul Pennington is a founding member of The Pool Safety Consortium, a nonprofit organization based in Washington DC. Having began as an informative database for industry leaders and tradesmen providing current standards of international and state codes, it has since evolved into much more. Currently, the Consortium works to educate the consumer on current legislation as well as available safety devices to help protect children and the lives of others from swimming pool and spa tragedies. For more information on the Pool Safety Consortium please visit (<http://www.poolsafetyconsortium.org>).

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