

POOL & SPA

NEWS

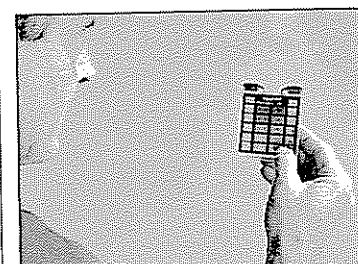
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Safety Act Likely to Call for Shut-Offs

By Rebecca Robledo It is possible that every residential pool built after Dec. 20, 2008, will be required to have some sort of device to

prevent suction entrapment. The Consumer Product Safety Commission released the requirements that residential pools must meet to

comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. The CPSC will accept public comments until *continued on page 22*



Data Released for Test Kit Accuracy Study

By John Miles The National Pool Industry Research Center in San Luis Obispo, Calif., has released the results of its study on the accuracy of pool and spa test kits.

The study examined 14 products from seven manufacturers, testing them for accuracy against a laboratory value. The project also looked at the variance between readings using the same kit. Participating companies included AquaChek, Guardex/Bio-Lab, LaMotte, Pentair Water Pool and Spa, Jack's Magic, Palintest and one anonymous manufacturer.

Tests were administered *continued on page 24*

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Highlights

Are your drain covers compliant? page 11

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Safety Act Likely to Call for Shut-Offs
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Sept. 29, then produce a final draft after considering the input.

As currently written, the mandate affects new as well as existing pools. It stipulates that, that by Dec. 19, all pools must have ASME-approved drain covers to prevent entrapment. (See story on page 11.)

The law also states that as of Dec. 20,

all new pools must be built one of two ways. The first way is to devise a system meant to eliminate suction from the pool entirely. This can be accomplished either by building a drainless vessel, installing a gravity drainage system with ASME-approved covers, or using unblockable outlets.

The second way to build a compliant

pool is to install dual drains supplemented by a safety vacuum release system, vent system or automatic pump shut-off.

All existing pools with single drains must be retrofitted. To do this, builders have four choices: Convert the vessels into dual-drain system; outfit them with the above-mentioned backup devices; disable all submerged outlets; or reconfigure the suction outlets into return inlets.

But, in reality, it's unknown whether vessels nationwide will have to meet these standards because of the way the Safety Act is written. Rather than being a straight mandate, much of the law is configured as an incentive program, offering grants to states for adopting the safety requirements. The actual funding — a total of \$4 million — hasn't yet been approved by Congress.

The section addressing drain covers is separate and applies to all pools nationwide.

The language could have a less-direct, but more enduring, impact. Those who believe SVRS's and similar devices should be mandated on every pool have already used the existence of the law to bolster their arguments before the International Code Council and other such decision-makers. No doubt, CPSC's interpretation of the Pool and Spa Safety Act will have serious sway with these entities.

The Safety Act contains barrier requirements as well. CPSC's initial draft states that inground and aboveground pools, as well as spas, must be protected by four-sided fences adhering to dimensions listed in the act. For aboveground and onground pools, the wall of the pool can serve as part of the barrier, with a fence mounted on top to reach the required height.

The house can work as one side of the fence, as long as all doors have an approved alarm, or the pool is fitted with an approved power safety cover. The language also states that manual covers must be placed over a spa anytime it is not in use.

For industry reaction to the draft, see an upcoming issue of *Pool & Spa News*. ■

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