

News Splash

Spring 2018

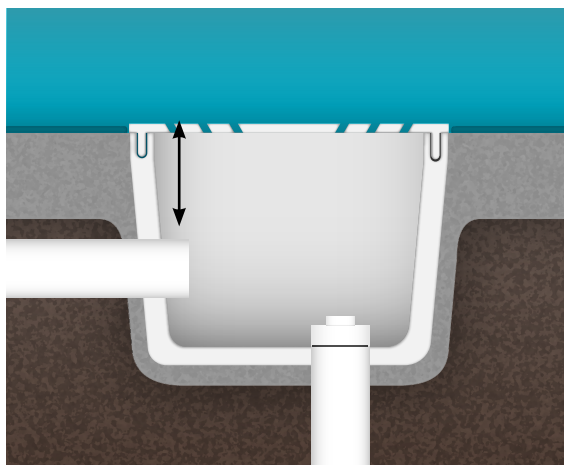
Virginia Graeme Baker Act: Safer Pool and Spa Drains

Stricter safety regulations are in place for pools and spas because of Virginia Graeme Baker. The seven-year-old died in 2002 after becoming entrapped on a spa drain at a party in Virginia. Her death led to the VGB Act and other federal requirements to prevent future deaths:

- New pools need to have two main drains at least three feet apart. This prevents someone from covering both drains.
- Existing pools with a single main drain need to have a safety vacuum release system or other way to prevent entrapment.
- Drain covers must prevent entrapment—from hair, body, limb, jewelry or bathing suits. They must also prevent evisceration and disembowelment.

How do I know my pool or spa drains covers are safe?

You need to have an engineer run calculations for the flows through your drain covers. They will also make sure the drain covers have the correct sump depth (if required) underneath them, as shown in this picture.



What if I'm going to replace my drain covers with a different style?

If yes, send proposed changes to the Health Department for plan review with a report from an engineer.

Most drain covers only last five years before you need to replace them. Over time, the sunlight and chemicals can make the plastic brittle and crack. Be sure to track when to replace them. If drain covers crack, break, are loose or are missing screws, you must immediately close the pool or spa. You cannot open it again until you replace or tighten the covers. This helps prevent entrapment and death, especially among children.

Annual Notifications

If you operate a pool where a lifeguard is not present, your guests need reminders of the rules at your pool or spa. At least once a year and when you have new guests or residents, you must let them know:

- Children 12 and younger must have an adult who's 18 or older with them.
- Anyone 17 or younger must have another person with them.

If you send out a summer newsletter, this is a great time to remind residents of the pool rules.

2018 Pool Operator Classes

Learn the fundamentals of swimming pool chemistry and equipment at the Health Department. At this basic pool operator's class we will give you a great start on running a safe and fun pool or spa.

May 17, 2018
9-11 a.m.

June 7, 2018
9-11 a.m.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Auditorium
3629 S. D St. Tacoma, WA 98418

Kids Disappear in the Blink of an Eye— Watch Them!

Every day in the United States two children under the age of 14 die from unintentional drowning. This is the second most common accidental death for this age group.

How do you prevent this? With active supervision:

- Watch your children and others you are responsible for.
- Do not assume others are watching your children.
- Make sure you are close enough to reach out and touch the children at all times. Do not supervise preschool age children from the poolside.
- Encourage other adults to watch their children.

Even if there's a lifeguard present, watch your children. Drownings can still happen.

Active supervision means you are watching the children. Not reading a book, or looking at or talking on your phone.

Find more information at www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreational-safety/water-safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html.

Record Keeping

To keep your pool or spa safe and healthy, you must test your chemicals at least once a day. If you are not within the correct ranges, you need to adjust your chemicals and retest. Whenever you do this, you must also document your results. This will help ensure you have records in case someone gets sick after swimming in your pool. It will also help you identify trends which you can use to adjust your chemicals.

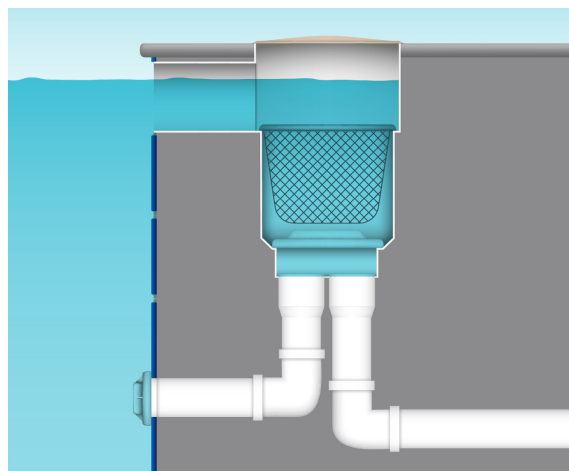
Test daily	Test weekly
Free chlorine	Alkalinity
Total chlorine or total bromine	Cyanuric acid (if used by your pool/spa)
pH	
Temperature (spas only)	

Did You Know?

- Pierce County issues about 500 pool, spa, wading pool, and spray pad permits each year. That's a lot of swimming opportunities!

- Simple math can help you figure out how many days you can go without draining spas and wading pools. Divide the size in gallons by three and then by the average number of users per day. This tells you how many days you can go before you must drain, clean and refill. For example: $300 \text{ gallons} / 3 = 100$. $100 / 20 \text{ users per day} = \text{five days}$.
- If your pool or spa uses a cartridge filter, then you should have extra filters. When you need to clean your filter, you can swap them and won't have to close. Empty and clean trash cans work great for soaking filters.
- Don't let children under 6 years old in spas. They cannot regulate their body temperatures as well as adults. They may overheat and pass out.
- If your pool has an emergency shut-off, you need to test it at least twice a year! Make sure it shuts off all the pumps.

What is That Hole on the Side of My Swimming Pool?



Have you ever noticed a small hole under your skimmer in your pool or spa? If yes, you have equalizer lines. They help protect your pump if the water levels in your pool or spa drop below the level of your skimmer.

If the water can't go through the skimmer, it will go through the equalizer line to prevent the pump from sucking air.

The equalizer line could entrap fingers or hair, so it must have a Virginia Graeme Baker compliant cover. Like main drain covers, you need to replace equalizer line covers every few years.