

Main Drain Safety Law

A final version of the swimming Pool and Spa Safety Act was signed into law by President Bush late last year and calls for the use of proper anti-entrapment drain covers, the establishment of a national drowning prevention education program and a grant incentive program for states to develop comprehensive Safety programs to protect children in and around pools and spas.

Both houses of Congress worked on similar measures last year, and final law was closest to the Senate Bill 1771, which had backing of the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals.

While the two bills were similar, the major exception was in the exact definition of “barriers”. The Senate bill provided the flexibility for using the swelling as on of the 4 sided enclosures around a pool, which is consistent with many current state laws.

Additional layers of protection, such as Fences, locks, door and pool alarms and pool cover, similar to many current state laws, are included.

On the entrapment issue, the law calls for several mitigating factors including safety vacuum release systems, vent lines and other comparable devices on all installations that have a single main drain. The law specifically exempts from the requirements installations that do not have a single main drain, including those with no main drain.

At the urging of the APSP, the entrapment guidelines in the new law are consistent with the new ANSI/APSP-7 Standard for suction entrapment avoidance.

The law codifies for the first time on a national level the drain cover requirements as stated in the ASME/ANSI performance standards, and had board industry backing.

In addition the law will:

- * Within one year, prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of drain covers that do not meet the anti-entrapment safety standards established by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and further directs the CPSC to establish those standards. Further, all public pools must be retrofitted with appropriate anti-entrapment drain covers within the next year.

- * Create a grant incentive program for states to adopt comprehensive pool and spa safety laws. It mandates that if states accept the grant funds, they must hire and train enforcement personnel for the implementation of the each state’s pool-safety laws, as well as educate pool service and construction companies, pool owners and operators about the standards and basic drowning prevention.

* Order the CPSC to establish a national drowning prevention education program to inform the public about ways to prevent drowning and entrapment, and to execute a national media campaign to promote safety awareness.

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