

Public swimming pools in Wisconsin are affected by federal agency changing the definition of an “unblockable” drain

The federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has changed the definition of an “unblockable” public swimming pool drain. This definition change affects public pools in Wisconsin having a single drain. Pool owners and the pool industry need to consider the situation.

Under the federal “Virginia Graeme Baker Act” (VGBA), public pools that have a single drain that is not unblockable must install one or more additional devices, such as a Safety Vacuum Relief System (SVRS), automatic pump shut off, gravity drainage system, or suction limiting vent system.

The new definition of the single pool “unblockable” drain means that the sump, in addition to the drain cover, must measure more than 18 by 23 inches and meet certain other criteria.

The new ruling has now been posted on the Federal Register with an October 11, 2011, effective date. See the federal register Web site for the interpretation revocation notice:
<http://www.cpsc.gov/businfo/frnotices/fr12/vgbunblockable.html>.

Pool Owners in Wisconsin

- If you have an existing pool that is affected by the CPSC definition change, contact your pool professional for direction on how to meet the requirements.

Pool Designers in Wisconsin

- All new pool and “VGBA” plans submitted to the Safety and Buildings Division for review must meet the current CPSC requirements for unblockable drains. Where plans had been reviewed prior to the change in CPSC requirements and the pool has not been inspected yet, if it has a “blockable” drain by the new definition, the inspection will focus on the approved plan. The compliance declaration will include a note that the pool drain now requires a secondary level of protection per the CPSC ruling.

- Existing swimming pools, whirlpools, wading pools, and water attractions that have previously received VGBA compliance declarations must also meet the current CPSC requirements for unblockable drains. If a modification to an existing pool basin and/or sump is necessary to meet the CPSC requirements, a pool modification plan must be submitted for review and approval prior to the modification being made. The modification plan must follow all applicable design requirements.

Additional information, including a list of FAQ’s is posted at the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals Web site. <http://www.apsp.org/Public/Home/index.cfm>.