

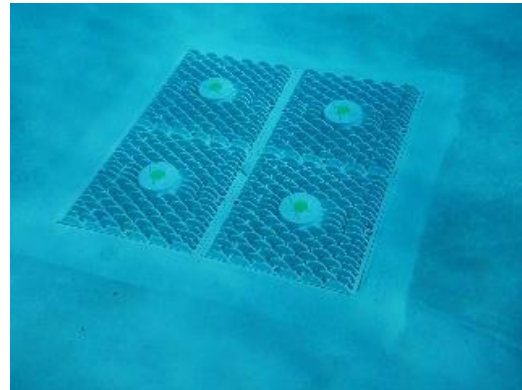


DRAIN COVERS EXPIRING 2016-2017

One of the primary purposes of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB) is to prevent serious injury or death caused by drain entrapment. Drain cover manufacturers are required to provide the consumer with information that tells them when the drain cover must be replaced before they begin to crack or show other signs of failure.

How Do I Find Out When My Drain Cover Expires?

VGB requires drain expiration information to be stamped on the top of each outlet cover and provided in the product literature. As you look at the top of the outlet cover you will see "Life ___ Years" stamped just below the design flow rating. You can also find this information in the product literature that came with each cover that says, "Replace within ___ installed years." This tells you when each cover must be replaced after the original installation date.



Is It Really Important To Replace My Covers On Time?

YES! Properly-fitted, secured and maintained drain covers are an extremely important means of protecting your pool users from very serious injury or death due to entrapment while using the facility. All outlet covers degrade over time from the effects of UV light, pool chemicals, etc. If a drain cover breaks or is not properly secured, the pool users are in imminent danger of serious injury. Depending on your original VGB solution, it might be time to replace your grates. Each grate was required to be stamped with an expiration date. The best way to verify is to "take a swim, and take a look".

Higher flow rates and special conditions may have required special VGB modifications at your site. Please make sure that these were completed by a licensed pool contractor as they constitute a modification of the pool. If you are suspicious that your predecessor went with a "Handyman Special", then it might be a great idea to take another look to verify compliance with the code. Qualified engineers are ready to help.

VGB...It's working!

According to a Consumer Products Safety Commission report, there have been zero fatalities in a public pool or spa due to entrapment since 2009, while the two fatalities in 2008 were directly linked to missing or broken covers. Drain related fatalities are completely unacceptable and the last few years have demonstrated what can be accomplished by adhering to the VGB safety guidelines.

Let's keep the streak going! In order to stay compliant with the law, and to help keep the improved safety record going strong, you may need to consider the following action items while reviewing your pools this year.

1. Each drain has its own EXPIRATION DATE which can range from 3 to 10 years and are required to be stamped directly on the grate. The cover and fastening system can become weakened over time due to exposure to UV light, chemicals and normal wear which can cause an entrapment hazard. Here are some expiration time frames for common VGB drain covers:

<i>Lawson Aquatics</i>	10 years	
<i>A & A</i>	10 years	
<i>Waterway</i>	7 years	Replacement NEEDED
<i>Triodyne</i>	7 years	Replacement NEEDED
<i>Hayward</i>	7 years	Replacement NEEDED
<i>Aqua Star</i>	5 years	Replacement PAST DUE
<i>Drainsafe DS360</i>	3 years	Replacement PAST DUE

Important action steps that you must take now that another pool season is upon us:

1. Verify what types of grates are installed in your facility and the expiration dates by actually taking a swim, and taking a look for yourself.
2. Verify that there are no changes since your VGB drain covers were installed. Even changing your pumps to a larger size could affect the VGB drain compatibility for your facility.
3. Make sure frame/sump is structurally sound and screws have at least 3 threads of engagement.
4. If a change is required, change the drain with the correct model as soon as possible. Remember to use new frames, spacers, screws etc.
5. Document your actions and file them accurately with information about your VGB compliance can be easily passed on to your insurance company, eventual successor, and your staff who can help to easily confirm your ongoing compliance with this law.
6. Document any applicable agencies. Where your Health Department may be involved, you may want to inform them that the VGB drains have been changed.

Conclusion

On-going compliance with VGB is not only the responsible way to operate your pool, it is the **LAW**. Drain related suction entrapment accidents have resulted in bad press, financial consequences to the owner and operators, and of course heightened operational scrutiny from the legal and regulatory agencies. Entrapment related fatalities are completely unacceptable and totally avoidable.