



Louie
Delaware

The Home
Safety Guru

Ensuring Pool & Hot Tub Drain Covers Are Safe

Every year there are children and adults who are caught in the drains of pools and hot tubs. The suction of the water is so powerful that it can pull a person onto the drain and keep them there. Furthermore, in 2007 there were a couple of young children who were seriously injured due to suction entrapment when they sat on a wading pool drain.

To minimize the possibility of these events, anyone who has a pool or hot tub should do the following:

- ◆ Ensure that drain covers for your pool and/or hot tub prevent the possibility of entrapment. In many cases, these drain covers have dome or star-shaped designs. In selecting a drain cover, make certain that it meets the requirements of and has passed testing against the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Standard (ASME) A112.19.8 – 2007.
- ◆ For people who have long hair, have them tie it up or put them in a braid to prevent it from being pulled into the drain covers.
- ◆ Never use a pool or hot tub with a missing or broken drain cover.
- ◆ If you are not certain as to how to properly inspect drain covers, hire a reputable and knowledgeable pool professional to inspect them for you. And then inspect them yourself through the course of the year.
- ◆ Ask at private or public pools if the drain covers have been inspected and are safe.
- ◆ Ensure that there are at least two drains for each pool or hot tub. If this is not feasible, consider installing a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS). This is a device that senses if there is a blockage in the drain and automatically shuts down the pump releasing the water suction.
- ◆ Know where the shutoff switch for the water pump is located and clearly identify it so it can be turned off quickly in an emergency.

Starting in December of 2008, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act goes into effect. This law was established after the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker was entrapped by the drain of a spa and drowned. This law mandates that new all pools and hot tubs meet the requirements of ASME A12.19.8 – 2007. But in the meantime, make certain that your pool or hot tub meets this requirement, whether it is a new or existing one.

Other pool and hot tub safety tips include:

- ◆ Install a pool safety fence between the home and the pool. Pool safety fences are made out of mesh material and are at least 48" tall (although it is recommended that the fence be 60" tall) and have a self-shutting, self-latching child-resistant gate. And never prop the gate open.
- ◆ With a pool or hot tub, there needs to be a second line of defense. Install child resistant locks high on the doors leading out of your home, alarms on doors to indicate that one has been opened, or a pool alarm to warn you that something has gotten into the water. And also keep in mind that windows leading to the pool area need to have a barrier or a stop to keep a child from getting out as well.
- ◆ Don't rely on pool nets to keep your child from getting access to the water. Some children have been known to get tangled in these. Likewise, don't rely on a pool cover as a safety measure as people sometimes



leave the pool area momentarily without shutting the cover and they can allow water to collect on the surface, which can attract a young child onto this unstable surface.

- ◆ Be prepared in case of an emergency by having rescue equipment and a cordless or cell phone near the pool, and learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

As being around water is supposed to be fun, let's make certain that everyone is safe. One drowning or entrapment is one too many.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation, along with fire, carbon monoxide, and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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