



POOL SAFETY CONSORTIUM

Contact: John Procter

Phone: (800) 970-8420

www.poolssafetyconsortium.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pool Safety Council Calls for Enforcement of Life-Saving Law

WASHINGTON, DC - December 19, 2008 – The Pool Safety Council called on federal, state and local officials across the United States to make enforcement of the Pool and Spa Safety Act, which goes into effect today a top priority. The law requires public pools to have safety devices recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission installed that prevent drain suction from trapping children underwater. Most pools can be brought into compliance with the installation of safety drain covers and an anti-entrapment device, but serious enforcement in every community will be key to saving lives.

Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death among children ages one to 14. According to Safe Kids USA, approximately 280 children younger than five drown each year in swimming pools, while thousands more are treated in emergency rooms for near-drowning.

In an effort to turn the tide on these disturbing numbers, the United States Congress passed the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, named after the young granddaughter of former Secretary of State James A. Baker drowned after becoming entrapped by a spa drain in 2002.

When a swimmer becomes stuck to a drain or suction outlet in a swimming pool, spa, wading pool, or hot tub, the force of the filtration system can be overpowering. It is called entrapment; when the supercharged suction from insufficiently covered drains pins the swimmer underwater. The pressure is so powerful that even strong swimmers can't escape, and would-be rescuers are unable to free them.

In the Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007, Congress tasked the Consumer Product Safety Commission with enforcement. However, the agency has said it will need assistance at every level, from federal offices to municipalities, to ensure that our nation's pools are safe and in compliance with the life-saving law.

Public reports indicate that some officials have no immediate plans to enforce the law. "This bill is going to save lives but we are concerned about some officials' commitment to protect our children through enforcement," said Paul Pennington, founding member of the Pool Safety Council. "While there is always room for improvement when it comes to safety, we urge officials at every level to inspect the public pools in their jurisdiction and make sure they are compliant. It is our hope that officials use the upcoming months to take the necessary measures to ensure that all children will be swimming in safe pools as quickly as possible."

For homeowners with pools, the Consumer Product Safety Commission strongly recommends the installation of fences, pool covers, alarms and drain covers for protection. Homeowners can protect

1.800.970.8420

www.PoolSafetyConsortium.org

themselves by examining their drain systems, alarms, pool covers and fences, and upgrading them with anti-entrapment devices such as a Safety Vacuum Release System.

Many incorrectly believe that the steps required to become compliant come with a huge price tag. “We are trying to raise awareness that most pools and spas can become safe and compliant with relatively little effort or expense, and at a fraction of some of the amounts being thrown around in the media,” Pennington concluded.

For more information, please visit our website at: www.poolafetyconsortium.org

1.800.970.8420

www.PoolSafetyConsortium.org