



How to Protect Your Children

Tips for Pool Safety

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While parental supervision is generally important for pool safety, watching children closely won't necessarily prevent an entrapment accident. A child can drown while his or her parents stand only feet away, even despite immediate rescue attempts.

On December 20th, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act will go into effect, establishing new safety standards for all public pools and spas in the nation.

Until then, here are the best methods of protection according to pool and spa safety expert, Paul Pennington:

Install anti-entrapment drain covers. These domed drain covers prevent hair and limbs from getting caught in drains. Additionally, because these drain covers are rounded, a child sitting on top of it will not create the type of dangerous suction that occurs with flat drain covers when all air is cut off to the drain.

Make sure that drain covers are set up with solid, stainless steel screws. These red-colored screws will not rust and corrode, unlike their counterparts which can rust over or strip and allow drain covers simply to float away.

Install a safety vacuum release system. This mechanical system fits in with the pool pump and recognizes even the smallest changes in pressure on the pool drain in six hundred/thousandths of a second. The system automatically reacts to the weight of a child sitting on a drain, and immediately shuts off power to the pool pump. In a pool without anti-entrapment drain covers, this kind of system would break the vacuum created by the child's body and release him/her instantly.

In the case of a child becoming entrapped, the most important thing a parent can do is not panic. There are ways to save a child if entrapment occurs:

Find the shut-off switch for the pool pump as quickly as possible.

Get the child off of the drain by pulling on him/her sideways. Pulling straight up will probably not help, but if you are able to reach around on the side of the child's body and wedge your fingers in there, you may be able to break the vacuum and free the child.

And finally, teach your children to stay away from drains.

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