



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ♦ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
RECREATIONAL WATERS PROGRAM
5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706 – (626) 430-5360



BULLETIN
(Updated October 11, 2009)

**TO: ALL PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL / SPA / WADING POOL OWNERS,
OPERATORS, CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS**

**SUBJECT: COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE,
SECTION 116064.2 (FEDERAL VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER ACT)**

This law applies to all public pools, spas and wading pools. It applies to those pools located at apartments, condominiums, townhouses, hotels, motels, schools, health clubs, mobile home parks, medical facilities, and includes municipal, resort and community pools.

On October 11, 2009, Assembly Bill 1020 was signed into California State law. This bill adds Section 116064.2 to the California Health and Safety Code. This new section incorporates provisions of the federal Virginia Graeme Baker (VGB) Act into California State law and is intended to prevent suction drain entrapments and drownings.

The new law requires that all public pools be retrofitted with approved drain covers manufactured after December 19, 2008. In addition, every suction drain on a pool must have a split (dual) drain; be equipped with a safety vacuum release system; or an automatic pump shut-off system must be provided. To see a copy of Assembly Bill 1020 in its entirety, please visit the website at:

http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/ep_rw_ab1020.pdf

The Recreational Waters Program will be enforcing the new State law throughout Los Angeles County as follows:

By July 1, 2010, owners of all public swimming pools and spas, **except** those listed below, must submit a “Certification of Compliance” form to Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health, Environmental Health (the Department), verifying that their pool(s) meet all provisions of the new State law.

Exemptions from the new state law include:

- All pools built after December 19, 2008, are exempt from these requirements as they have already been approved by the Department to comply with the new law.
- All pools that have already been retrofitted to meet the new State law are exempt from these requirements. “Already retrofitted” means plans were submitted to the Department and either a final inspection was made by our staff or a “Certification of Compliance” form was filed with the Department.

Swimming pools and spas with existing split drain(s), however, must be evaluated by a contractor to ensure full compliance with Requirements (a) through (d) listed below. Additionally, these pools and spas will require retrofitting with new approved drain covers and must comply with Requirements (e) through (h) listed below. Each pool must be evaluated by a licensed California contractor as most will require some type of modification (e.g. drain cover replacement).

Swimming pools and spas with single drain(s) must be retrofitted with one of the following:

- Split drains following Requirements (a) through (i) listed below;
- Installation of an approved, “unblockable drain”. (An “unblockable drain” means a drain cover or grate with a minimum dimension of 23 inches x 18 inches OR a channel drain with a height of 3 inches or greater and length of 31 inches or greater.)
- Installation of a safety vacuum release or automatic pump shut-off system. The system must comply with the latest ASME/ANSI A112.19.17 performance standards. Covers/grates will still need to be replaced with approved types. The safety vacuum release or automatic pump shut-off system must be installed per manufacturer’s instructions. To see a list of approved safety vacuum release systems, please visit the website at:

<http://www.poolsafety.gov/svrsman.html>

Note: This Department will not inspect the system to determine whether it is functioning properly; if it has been calibrated; if it is being properly maintained; or whether it will be periodically tested. This shall be the responsibility of the owner/operator of the pool/spa.

Submittal of Plans

Any person who proposes to build a new public pool; replaster or renovate an existing public pool; makes any plumbing changes to a public pool or spa; drains a pool for any reason; changes drain covers or grates; or makes any equipment changes is required to submit plans to the Department and pay a plan check fee prior to commencing the work. This must be done prior to the issuance of any permits. An online plan check application can be obtained at the following website:

http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/ep_rw_planapp.pdf

Once the plans have been approved, a “Certification of Compliance” form will be returned to the contractor with the approved plans. Within 30 days after completing the work, the owner/contractor is required to complete the “Certification of Compliance” form and return the original copy to the Recreational Waters Program. A field inspection by the Department will not be required for the VGB modifications. **However, the Department reserves the right to conduct an inspection of any pool that has had a “Certification of Compliance” form submitted to verify compliance; any discrepancies found will require immediate correction and may require closure. All other modifications to public pools and spas, not in conjunction with the VGB requirements will continue to mandate the usual field inspections.**

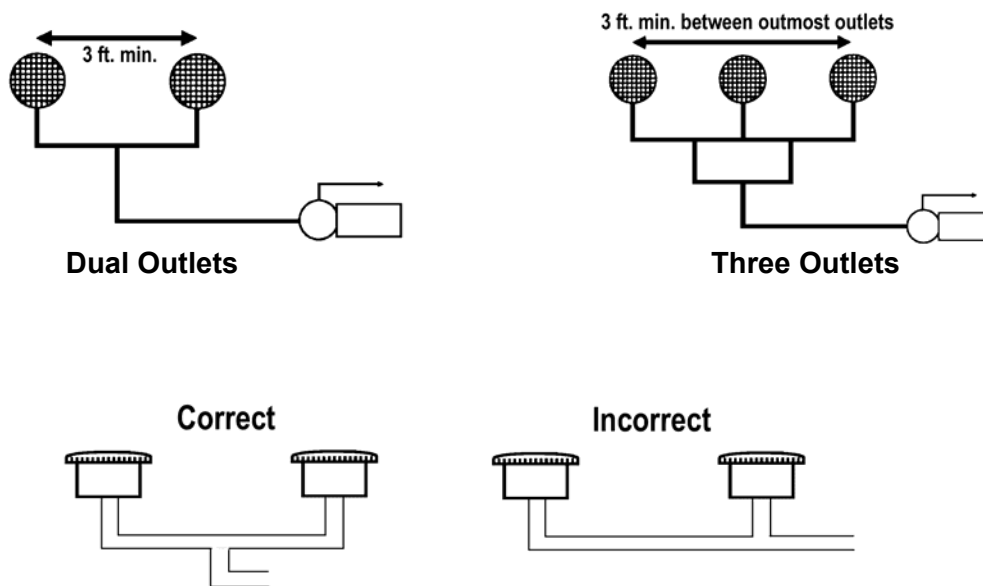
Pools not in compliance by July 1, 2010 may be subject to closure by the Department.

Only Qualified Contractors Are Authorized to Conduct the Work:

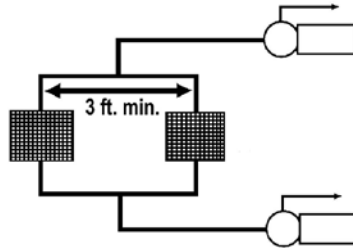
- All persons building a new public pool, replastering, resurfacing, renovating, or replumbing an existing public pool must possess a valid California C53 (pool builder) or an "A" (general engineering) contractor's license. (A C35 (plasterer) is only licensed to replaster a pool).
- Splitting drains or installing an unblockable drain will require a California C53 (pool builder), a California C36 (plumber) or an "A" (general engineering) contractor's license.
- A contractor with a California C61/D35 may replace drain covers, install safety vacuum release systems and evaluate sumps, but cannot modify any sumps.
- **Use of Divers**
Divers will be allowed to replace drain covers/grates and/or split drains with the following stipulations:
 1. A plan check will be required before the commencement of any work.
 2. The diver must possess one of the valid California contractor's licenses required above.

REQUIREMENTS:

- a. The suction side of each pump, located on any type of pool, shall be plumbed with at least two suction outlets. Suction outlets shall be separated by a distance of at least 3 feet, measured from the center of one suction pipe to the other. The suction drains must be plumbed with a T in the center that is hydraulically balanced. Each branch of the "T" must be at least the same size as the main suction plumbing. Note: Spas have two separate systems, one for the filtration and the other for the jets. Both systems need to comply with dual drain requirements.



- b. Each branch of a split suction shall terminate under its own suction outlet cover/grate. Except, suction plumbing from two different pumps may terminate under one suction outlet cover/grate if the combined flow rate of each suction pipe is less than the flow ratings of a single cover/grate.



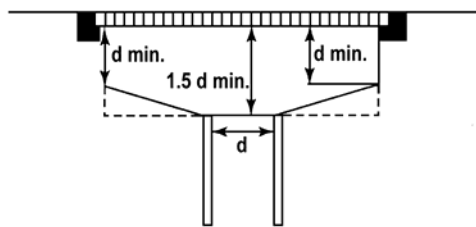
- c. In situations where room on the floor is limited, (e.g. in a spa), the suction outlets may be located less than 3 feet apart, as long as they are located on different design planes (e.g. one drain on the floor and one on the wall or two different walls) and as long as they are offset so a body cannot cover both suction outlet covers\grates. When a suction outlet is located on a wall, the bottom edge of the cover/grate shall be within 3 inches of the floor.
- d. The flow rating of each cover/grate shall be equal to or greater than the flow rating of the pump it is connected to. For example, if a pump is rated at 80 gpm at 60 feet of head, each cover/grate of the split suction must be rated at 80 gpm or greater. If 3 or more suction outlets are used, refer to the table below.

Number of covers/grates per system	Minimum flow rating of each cover/grate % maximum system flow rate
2	100%
3	66.7%
4	50%
5	40%
6	33.3%

- e. All drains/grates will be required to meet the latest ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standards. A list of covers/grates, approved by this Department, can be obtained on our web site at:

http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/ep_rw equip.pdf

- f. If the suction outlet cover/grate is not part of the manufactured sump and is placed on a field-built sump, the sump must comply with the following dimensions.



d= inside pipe diameter

Field built sumps with lesser dimensions will be allowed if the covers have been tested with lesser dimensions and specifically stated in the manufacturer's installation instructions.

- g. All skimmers shall be dual port design. Skimmers shall be vented to atmosphere through an opening in the lid. Skimmers shall be connected to either an equalizer line or a main drain. A main drain connected to a skimmer requires split main drains.
- h. Cover/grate and sump requirements for main drains shall also apply to all equalizer lines, except, the cover/grate is not required to be within 3 inches of the pool floor.
- i. Drain covers shall not be directly in line with diving boards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information please contact our office at (626) 430-5360, Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm or visit our website at:

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/rw.htm