

City of Vacaville

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SWIMMING POOL SAFETY ACT CHANGES

Earlier this year, a change to an existing law went into effect in California regarding the safety and security of a variety of swimming pools and spas located in private homes.

The previous pool safety law required any home remodel permit to include verification of a pool or spa anti-entrapment device. The new law only requires anti-entrapment verification for permits issued specifically for a pool or spa. Home remodel permits, where no work is done on a pool or spa, no longer require verification of anti-entrapment device.

The Swimming Pool Safety Act requires that an anti-entrapment cover be installed at all pool and spa drains any time a pool or spa remodel building permit is issued.

As a result of the new requirements, the City of Vacaville is adding an anti-entrapment inspection requirement to pool and spa remodel permits. Prior to approving the final inspection of a pool or spa remodel permit a City inspector must verify that an anti-entrapment device is installed in an existing pool, spa, or toddler pool within the property boundaries for the address shown on the pool or spa remodel permit.

The law is specific to building permits associated with single family homes and does not apply to electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits. Those property owners with pools who do not obtain the proper permits or inspections for a pool or spa remodel could be exposing themselves to litigation – as well as a potential tragedy.

(More)

Hair entanglement is far and away the most common drain-related killer of children between the ages of 2 and 6. When bathers or swimmers place their heads in the vicinity of active pool drains, their hair may become entangled in the drain cover or grating. From 1978 to 1996, the Consumer Products Safety Commission reported 49 entanglements (including 13 deaths) where the victims' heads were held under the water in spas, hot tubs, and whirlpools.

Those wishing to obtain a pool or spa remodel permit should inspect the pool or spa for anti-entrapment safeguards. If the pool or spa was constructed in 1998 or later, it probably has anti-entrapment safeguards in place. If the pool or spa was constructed prior to 1998, it may not have one of the newly-required safeguards.

Fortunately, there are products readily available which can be installed on pools which were constructed without anti-entrapment protection. Existing pools can be retrofitted with a drain cover specifically designed to prevent entrapment. The new cover is installed simply by removing the existing drain cover and replacing it with the new anti-entrapment cover.

The City of Vacaville's building inspection staff can assist residents in determining whether or not an existing pool or spa is equipped with an entrapment safeguard.

Contact a local pool contractor or pool maintenance company for installation information. For more information on this new requirement, contact the City of Vacaville Building Inspection Department at (707) 449-5152.

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