

# POOL AND SPA SAFETY FOR HOSPITALITY AND MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES

ALLIANZ RISK CONSULTING



A luxury hotel, resort or multifamily community wouldn't be complete without a refreshing pool and relaxing spa for the enjoyment of your guests or residents.

But water amenities bring significant risks. Any pool related accident certainly impacts those injured and may affect your business operations.

Therefore, keeping your tenants and guests safe by providing a clean and well-maintained swimming facility is a significant property management responsibility. By being aware of water-related hazards and taking certain precautions, you can help assure that your pool and spa remain enjoyable and safe for all.

## WATER FACILITY BEST PRACTICES

The following guidelines outline some practices that can help keep your swimming facility a fun and safe place for your tenants and guests:

- Have secured entry for both indoor and outdoor pools without lifeguards. Access should be controlled by passkey or key card.
- Securely fence (six feet or higher) the entire perimeter of all swimming pools and spas. Gates leading to the pool should be self-closing with a latch attachment located inside the fence that is at least 4 feet high.
- Provide easy, clearly visible access to safety equipment, including shepherd's hook and life rings, within the fenced area.
- Make sure diving boards meet ANSI/NSPI requirements for pool size and depth.
- Install swimming pool slides according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Post rules and regulations for swimming pool use in plain view.



## FEDERAL LAW HELPS SAVE LIVES

From 1999 to 2008, there were 12 fatalities due to water circulation entrapment, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Then in 2008, after the death of a young girl in Tennessee, the federal Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act was passed.

The act requires public pools and spas to be equipped with compliant suction outlet covers and/or secondary anti-entrapment devices, depending on your pool configuration.

- Install legible depth markers at the sides of the pool above the water line and at the top of the pool edge.
- Clearly mark the deep end and shallow end with a painted line on the pool floor and/or floats at the depth change point.
- Install lighting in the pool area and/or spa that illuminates the water and surrounding deck.
- Equip swimming pools and spas with a suction vacuum release system (SVRS) to protect swimmers from suction entrapment.
- Ensure that electrical outlets or electrical equipment within the pool area have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- Monitor and treat swimming pool and spa water daily to keep it clear. Keep a daily log of each treatment.
- Inspect pool handrails daily to ensure they are properly secured.
- Require pool service contractors to furnish certificates of insurance and name the property owner and manager as an additional insured. Ask for a formal written contract whereby they agree to hold the property owner and manager harmless, indemnify the company, and grant it additional insured status.
- Check with your local government to determine if it has additional requirements.



Comprehensive inspections of pool and spa facilities are required to assure correct installation and operation of the safety device(s). You'll find valuable tools and resources on the "State and Local Officials" page of the CPSC's [Pool Safely](https://www.poolsafely.gov) website ([poolsafely.gov](https://www.poolsafely.gov)). Specifically, CPSC staff has developed [Guidance to Compliance](https://www.poolsafely.gov/educational-materials-catalog/?sresult=524), an eight-part video training series explaining how to properly inspect pools and spas for compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (<https://www.poolsafely.gov/educational-materials-catalog/?sresult=524>). Visit [Pool Safely](https://www.poolsafely.gov) to view the videos or to request a free copy.

## THE DANGER OF DRAIN ENTRAPMENT

A very serious drowning risk is drain entrapment, which often affects children. Entrapment occurs when part of a person's body becomes attached to a drain as a result of the powerful suction of the water circulation system. Sometimes this happens when a child sits on the drain or inserts an arm or leg when a cover is missing or broken. It can also occur when hair or a piece of swimsuit gets tangled in the drain or on an underwater object such as a ladder.

The force of the suction can overpower a child's ability to get away from the drain and rise to the surface of the water, leading to death or serious injury. Often, the strength of an adult is still not enough to remove a child trapped by a pool or spa drainage system.

## ENTRAPMENT AND ENTANGLEMENT PREVENTION TIPS

Below are additional steps you can take to reduce the likelihood of pool drowning from entrapment:

- Check your drain covers to make certain they conform to industry standards.
- Make sure that your suction pumps are not too powerful for the size of your pool or spa.
- Use a safety vacuum-release system as an additional protective device. These systems detect any blockage of a drain and automatically shut off the suction to prevent entrapment.
- Equip new pools and spas with multiple drains — not just one — to decrease the amount of suction at any one drain site. Have your facility maintenance staff check these devices regularly.
- In conjunction with these safety devices and barriers, a trained lifeguard should be on duty during pool or spa hours. If you do not have a lifeguard on duty, post a visible warning in the pool area.

- Keep a phone nearby in case of an emergency.
- Train your staff in infant and child CPR and rescue safety.
- Alert parents to the hazards of long hair and caution children to not play in a way that could allow long hair to become caught in a drain.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice published updated regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These regulations adopted the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, which, for the first time, contain specific accessibility requirements for a number of types of recreational facilities, including swimming pools, wading pools and spas. The following online resources can help you determine compliance requirements for your facility:

- [ADA Requirements: Accessible Pools Means of Entry and Exit \(https://www.ada.gov/pools\\_2010.htm\)](https://www.ada.gov/pools_2010.htm)
- [ADA Standards for Accessible Design \(https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards\\_index.htm\)](https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm)

For accessibility equipment, such as pool lifts:

- Ensure the equipment is installed to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Train all appropriate staff on its maintenance and use.
- Institute an ongoing inspection program that includes, but is not limited to, checking:
  - Electrical, ground fault interruption safety devices
  - Batteries
  - Personal securing straps
  - That legible instructions are properly posted
  - That connections are secure
- Be aware these devices can be an attractive nuisance within the pool area and make every attempt to alert patrons of the dangers of playing on or around these devices.

Design: [Graphic Design Centre](#)

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