

Swimming Pool Safety Bulletin

Sunshine, warm weather, and more daylight hours can add up to possible injuries and liability claims for Municipalities offering their citizens the use of Parks, Playgrounds, and Swimming Pools. Now is the time for municipalities to perform special, thorough inspections of these facilities before they are opened for use. Let us first take a look at the **most important** aspects for Swimming Pool Safety. The following information will help you prepare for a safe and accident free Swimming season.

Have an Emergency Plan:

Ensure that you have an Emergency Plan prepared and that it is up to date and ensure that all employees are trained in the execution of the Emergency Plan's procedures. Include in Emergency Plan; procedures to follow in situations such as; drowning, electrical shock, heat prostration, fractures, and poisonings, etc. It is important to implement periodic drills for employees in the execution of the emergency plan's procedures. Always post EMERGENCY phone numbers for Rescue Squads, Ambulances, Hospitals, Fire Departments, and Police Departments, etc. in the First Aid room and also in the Pool Filter room. A copy of the **National Spa and Pool Institute Minimum Standards for Public Swimming Pools** is to be available on the premises and employees must be familiar with its guidelines.

Qualified Lifeguards and Other Employees:

Employ Lifeguards who are Certified through **American Red Cross Advanced Lifesaving** or other recognized certifying agencies. Ensure that an adequate number of lifeguards are on duty at all times. Pool Management employees also shall be certified Lifeguards if they are ever required to serve in that capacity. Pool management personnel must be trained in all of the facility operations.

Safety Equipment:

It is very important to mention here the "**VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER POOL AND SPA SAFETY ACT**" that became effective December 19, 2008. It is imperative that all pools/spas comply with this law. Pools shall not be in operation until they are in compliance. Likewise, it is extremely important to have all necessary safety equipment available and placed in specific areas near the pool. **Reaching Poles, Shepherd's Crook, Throwing buoys, Plastic or Foam Tubes** are all important safety rescue equipment that must be readily available.

Pool and Deck Area:

Water depth markings are extremely important and shall be a minimum of four inches. They are to be painted at or above the water surface on the vertical walls of the pool and deck edge next to the pool. These markings must be visible by day and under artificial lighting and must be placed at specific intervals in not more than 25 feet increments. A special and important safety application in the pool is a “required” buoyed lifeline at the change of depth from shallow to deep water. This lifeline buoy must be stretched from pool side to side tightly enough to support an adults head above water. Some means of egress shall be provided for each 75 feet of the pool perimeter. Also, ladders or other means of egress must be provided at both the deep and shallow ends of the pool. Another factor in compliance with pool safety is to ensure that spectator areas are to be separated from swimmer areas.

Pool Rules:

Rules that state the expected behavior of patrons must be conspicuously displayed inside the pool facility and at the entrance to the facility. These rules must be Highly Visible and legible. “NO RUNNING” signs are to be displayed in strategic locations around the pool. Employees are to be trained to ENFORCE the rules in a fair and equitable manner.

First Aid:

First Aid requirements state that an area or a room must be set aside for emergency care of injured patrons. A standard “24 Unit” first aid kit that is always filled and ready for Emergency use is to be available. Stretchers, blankets, and a backboard (made to the specifications of the American Red Cross) must be available.

Maintenance of Pool Equipment:

I will re-iterate here the grave necessity for the provisions in the “VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER” Act to be followed. The Equipment and Chlorinator rooms must be provided with non-slip, impervious floors and properly placarded. Proper ventilation must be provided in these areas and near the Chlorinator. Proper water testing shall be performed as required and records maintained according to the requirements of all local, state, and federal health and safety guidelines.

Occupant Capacity:

The pool capacity shall be calculated and posted at the pool entrance and around the pool Area. It is the duty and responsibility of the Lifeguards to enforce the occupant load Requirements.

Bath Houses/Dressing Rooms:

It is a continuous task to maintain the cleanliness and sanitary condition of the Bath House, but it is an important one. The floor surfaces are to be smooth, impervious and non-slip. Adequate lighting must be provide and maintained.

Proper ventilation, also, must be provided and maintained. There should be a minimum of one lavatory provided for each Sixty patrons. One toilet and one urinal must be provided for each 60 male patrons, also One toilet shall be provided for each Forty female patrons. Lavatories, urinals, and toilets are to be cleaned and disinfected at LEAST twice daily. Floors are to be cleaned and disinfected frequently. In the interest of the liability of the municipality, PROPER documentation of all pool maintenance and inspections shall be properly documented and kept on file. More detailed and pertinent information regarding Swimming Pool Regulations and Requirements may be obtained from the Risk Management, Inc. Safety Staff.

****REFERENCE:** www.cdc.gov