

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY ACT HAS NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMEOWNERS OF NEW AND EXISTING POOLS, SPAS, AND TODDLER POOLS

On January 1, 2007, a new law went into effect in California regarding the safety and security of swimming pools and spas located in private homes, including those in the City of Santa Paula.

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

As a result of the new requirements, the City of Santa Paula is adding an anti-entrapment inspection requirement to all single family home building permits. Prior to approving the final inspection of a home remodel permit issued after January 1, 2007, 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 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 home remodel could be exposing themselves to litigation-as well as a potential tragedy.

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 obtaining a building permit for a home remodel or modification for a home with an existing swimming pool and/or spa should inspect the pool or spa for anti-entrapment

safeguards. If the pool was constructed in 1998 or later, it probably has anti-entrapment safeguards in place. If the pool/spa was constructed prior to 1998, it may not have one of the newly-required safeguards.

Fortunately, there are readily available products 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 Santa Paula 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 Santa Paula Building & Safety Department at (805) 933-4218. Let's make this summer a safe one and take every precaution possible for our family and friends when it comes to pool use.

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