

CPSC vote on unblockable drains – how is Florida affected?

By J Hatfield & Associates, PL

September 28, 2011 saw a CPSC vote that altered the way unblockable pool and spa drains are defined. The 3-2 decision states that sumps will now be included in the requirements. Single drain public pools with a sump that measures less than 18"x23" that invested in an unblockable drain cover will find themselves choosing between the accepted alternative measures to facilitate VGB compliance by the proposed May 28, 2012 deadline.

Solutions fitting that description include gravity drainage systems, automatic pump shutoff, suction vacuum release systems (SVRS), vent lines, installation of a second drain, or drain disablement. The contentious decision includes 60 days of public comment on the feasibility of the compliance date, an option some felt should have been exercised prior to the vote rather than afterward.

Florida is not affected by the ruling to the degree that other states may be, due to the existing gravity drainage requirement. Those public pools and spas with gravity are already in compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Act, regardless of the new ruling. It is the roughly 5,000 pools and spas in this state without gravity that are affected if they have an unblockable drain cover over a non-unblockable sump. At this time, the number of facilities that this may apply to is unknown.