

WHY READ OUR STANDARDS WHEN WE HAVE CODES?

By Dan Johnson, Swim Inc.

Have you read the Standards that apply to your work? You should. For residential pools it's the ANSI/APSP-5 Standard and for commercial it's the ANSI/APSP-1 Standard. Why should you read them? Because building codes apply to only limited phases of what we build. Standards are far more comprehensive and if you happen to find yourself involved in a lawsuit over an alleged deficiency or defect, I can assure you – the applicable standard will become either your best friend or your worst enemy. Standards are the foundation of building codes nationwide and set the legal benchmarks against which our work is measured.

The re-write of the ANSI-APSP-5 Standard has been completed and the new version has now been published – you should buy it and read it; a number of FSPA members participated in its development. Some of the changes are significant such as the method of locating “point A” which is the starting point for locating all dimensional requirements in diving pools. If you build diving pools, you need to get this right. Re-defining this point was the direct result of a lawsuit where the language used to determine its location in the 2003 version of the standard was brought into question.

Why are standards updated? Well, the issue concerning point A above is one good reason. In addition, the re-write process must take place every four years to maintain the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) credential. They require this so that standards keep up with new technologies and product or process improvements.

The ANSI/APSP-7 Suction Entrapment Avoidance standard is a great example of advancement in technological knowledge mandating an update. This Standard was the foundation upon which the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act was constructed. Months after the Act went into effect members of the writing committee discovered that many of the pools being refitted for compliance were being modified incorrectly and actually may not be compliant. Most of those involved didn't even know the accuracy of the compliance procedure was uncertain. And then along comes the drain cover recall, which initiated some additional changes in the Standard. The latest re-write has just been completed and is being prepared for the consensus voting process now.

On August 10th the FSPA in cooperation with the APSP is presenting a free VGB seminar at the Central Florida Chapter, which will clarify what's been done incorrectly and how to verify compliance. You should attend – you'll get a great education and 2 hours of CE credit. At this seminar you'll be learning what you don't know you don't know – but need to know.