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### Residential Pool Safety Increases with New National Standard Adoption

The swimming pool industry in Florida is working to increase safety. The 2007 Florida Building Code, which will go into effect December 31, 2008, provides that all residential pools follow the ANSI/ APSP-7 Standard. ANSI/ APSP-7 *American National Standard for Suction Entrapment Avoidance in Swimming Pools, Wading Pools, Spas, Hot Tubs, and Catch Basins*, is the only comprehensive approach to engineering swimming pools and spas to avoid all five entrapment hazards: hair entrapment, limb entrapment, body suction entrapment, evisceration/ disembowelment and mechanical entrapment. The performance requirements and construction practices in this standard are based upon sound engineering principles, research and field experience that, when applied properly, provide for a safe installation that is consistent with the requirements of the federal Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act.

ANSI-7 requires covers listed to the 2007 ANSI/ ASME A112.19.8 cover standard on all drains and requires that pools and spas not be used whenever approved covers are missing or damaged. These covers are safer because the new standard includes a finger and limb entrapment test, a body entrapment test, shear load and pull load tests, UV weathering, fastener testing and two hair tests. New designs include smaller holes and contoured shapes. In addition, each cover must be permanently labeled with a maximum flow rating and life expectancy. Only 2007 ASME A112.19.8 approved drain covers are allowed to be sold in the US as of December 20, 2008.

For new construction, pools may be built with no main drains, multiple outlets, or a single outlet that a torso cannot block (because of size/ shape), known as an unblockable outlet. These methods eliminate the suction, reduce the suction or prevent a complete seal from occurring. To retrofit existing pools with a single drain that is unblockable, options include converting the drain to a single unblockable suction outlet or installing a cover/ grate certified to the 2007 ASME A112.19.8 standard and at least one of the following: an additional suction outlet(s), gravity flow system, vent system, safety vacuum release system (SVRS), converted suction outlet to return inlet, and/ or disable the suction outlet and utilize a skimmer capable of the full system flow.

Steps are being taken to make swimming pools safer. The difficulty is with existing pools. To enforce any mandate of retrofitting the approximately 1.1 million pools in Florida would be a monumental task. Informing pool owners of the possible dangers and encouraging them to ensure their pool is compliant with this standard is extremely important! The Florida Swimming Pool Association and its industry members work to encourage safety and inform consumers on how to safely enjoy their pools.

The Florida Swimming Pool Association is a trade association for the pool and spa industry in Florida. There are approximately 700 member businesses in 16 Chapters across the state. Members are required to abide by a code of ethics and to be properly licensed and insured. FSPA provides the industry with access to continuing education courses, information on current trends and issues, an arbitration program and government relations representation. FSPA is governed by a Board of Directors.

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