

Wisconsin Recreational Facilities FACT SHEET



Virginia Graeme Baker Act (VGBA)—Drain Covers



VGBA devices have life spans

This Act requires all commercial pools and spas to be equipped with anti-entrapment drain covers and devices.

Why do these devices have life spans?

Chemicals, UV light, and normal wear will break down the cover, fastening system, and other components, which can cause a potential entrapment hazard. It is important for operators to replace drain covers before the life span expires.

What is the life span of my VGBA drain cover?

Look on the cover or the specification sheet that came with the drain cover. Most covers have between a five- and 20-year life span. The lifespan will be indicated on the specification sheet or instruction manual, or on the cover itself.

What is the difference between a ‘2008’ and ‘2017’ drain cover?

‘2017’ drain covers have been designed to meet newer 2017 VGBA standards. Because of this, ‘2017’ drain covers come with their own specific instructions and ratings. Do not use ‘2008’ instructions for a ‘2017’ drain cover.

What should I do?

It is the responsibility of the facility operator to meet all federal and state requirements, maintain their equipment, and adhere to the manufacturer’s directions per Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATPC 76—Safety, Maintenance, and Operation of Public Pools and Water Attractions.

Use of the VGBA Drain and Equalizer Cover Replacement Log (DFRS-BFRB-014.docx (rev. 04/2024)) is strongly recommended to help maintain appropriate and accurate records.

1. Refer to the drain cover and manufacturer’s manual or specification sheet for the drain cover being replaced. Verify that the cover has not been recalled. Refer to the instructions and verify that the gallons per minute rating is the same or still adequate for the peak flow of the pump.
2. For each licensed pool facility, document the following:
 - a. Name or type of pool, location, and license number (so it is clear which pool the paperwork belongs to when there are multiple pools at a property)
 - b. Date of installation for each drain cover
 - c. Location of the drain covers installed
 - d. Number of drain covers installed
 - e. Manufacturer’s name and model for each drain cover installed
 - f. Date designation for cover design (2008 or 2017)
 - g. Life span for each drain cover installed
 - h. Gallons per minute (gpm) rating for each cover installed
 - i. Initials of person making the record
3. Replace expired drain covers with the same manufacturer and model or the recommended replacement model. Inspect the entire device: frame, sump, screws, plaster rings and spacers. Do NOT reuse old screws or drill new holes.
4. Keep the log and supporting documents on site for inspections.

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