

News Splash

Spring 2024

New drain cover standards

You may be familiar with our inspectors asking for your VGBA paperwork. But why this is so important? In 2002, a 7-year-old girl named Virginia Graeme Baker got stuck on a hot tub drain and died. In response, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Act (VGBA) was created to help prevent drain entrapment. It became law in 2007 and sets manufacturing and installation requirements.

What changed?

A new standard for manufacturing drain covers went into effect on May 24, 2021. ANSI/APSP/ICC-16 2017 includes:

- Changes to physical testing requirements.
- New definitions.
- New labeling requirements for drain covers.
- New requirements for the installation of drain covers.

You may use existing drain covers certified to a prior VGBA standard until the covers expire or need replacement.

What does this mean for me?

You may need to replace your covers. When you do, you may only be able to find covers made under the new standard. When installing, make sure you meet all the installation requirements. The required sump depth, pipe size, pipe offset, and maximum flow rate may have changed. You must meet all manufacturer installation requirements to be VGBA compliant. Document this on your VGBA paperwork—a new form is coming soon that will have space for you to record this information.

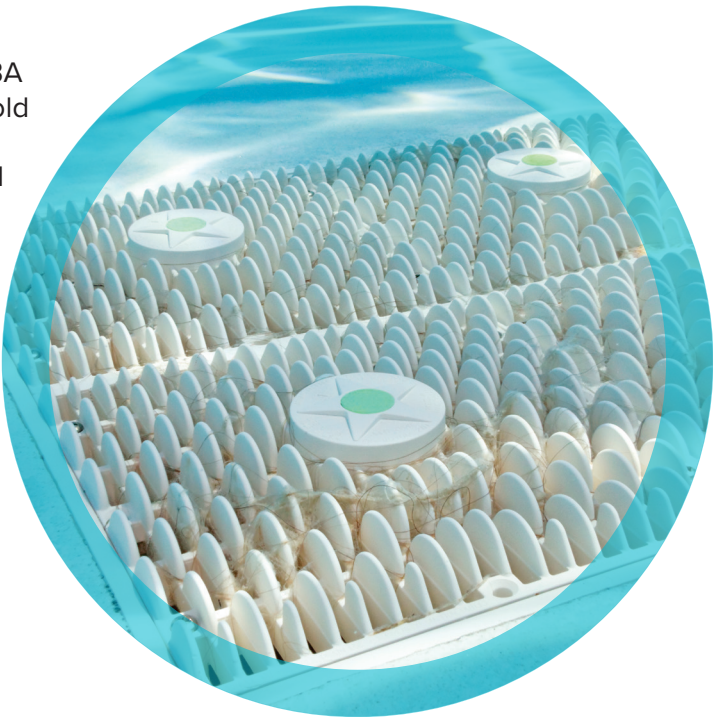
Remember! You need a plan review if you can't meet installation requirements and need to change to a new cover style.

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Is your pool no longer in operation?

You may be eligible for an inactive facility permit. This permit is for pools or spas that aren't in operation for the season. It is a reduced cost of \$217. You still receive inspections to ensure the:

- Facility is being kept locked.
- Barrier is adequate.
- Water is not creating a nuisance or disease hazard.

A pool can still create a public health risk if it's not in use. It can become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. You must maintain water clarity and quality. If you cannot, you should drain the pool.

Has it been more than 12 months since your pool was in operation?

You must:

- Cover your pool with a safety cover that meets ASTM standard F1346-91.
- Backfill the pool.

Demolishing your pool? Check with your local building department to apply for any needed permits. If the pool is completely removed, we will close out your permit.



Is it time to resurface?

Over time, your pool or spa surface may become rough or abrasive, which can cause discomfort and scrapes for your swimmers. You may also notice more staining or difficulty keeping the pool surface clean. Most pools or spas need resurfacing every 5–8 years. Does it feel rough like sandpaper when you run your knuckles over the surface of the pool? You may need to resurface soon. Make sure that when you resurface, you select a white or light color finish. Dark colors make it difficult to see someone on the bottom of the pool in an emergency.

When resurfacing:

- Fix things like uneven steps.
- Repair ladders.
- Tighten handrails.
- Check depths to ensure depth markers are accurate.

If you have a single main drain, it is a great time to upgrade to a dual main drain system. Be sure to contact our Community Safety Team if you plan to modify piping or alter sumps.

The surface is more at risk to stain, scale, and discolor the first 28 days after resurfacing. Follow the guidelines from the service provider to ensure the surface cures properly. This will help the surface look good and last for many years.

Code Revision



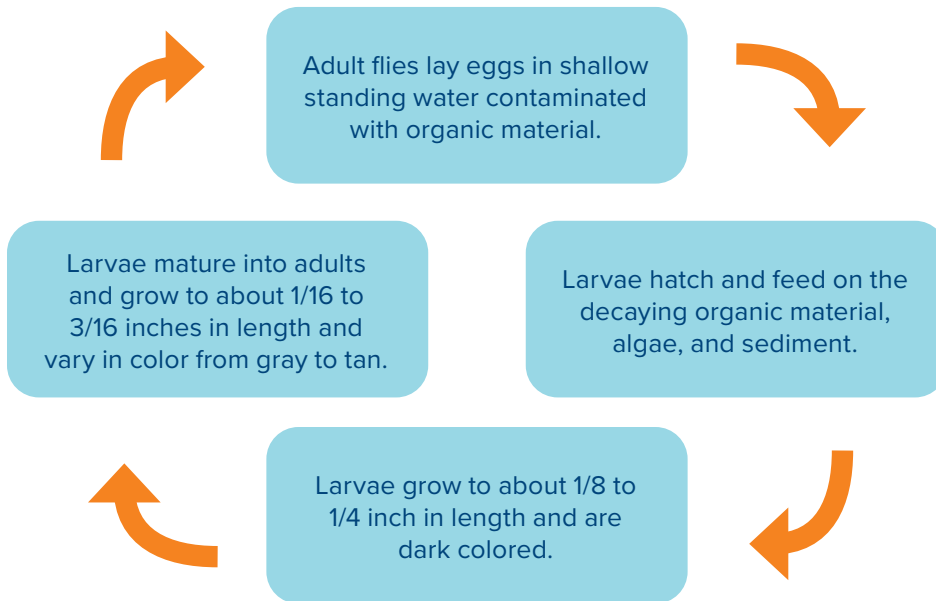
Did you know Washington is considering updating the water recreation rules?

The update would adopt the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) standards. This would help improve health and safety for the public. A technical advisory committee began meeting in July to review code language.

Scan the QR code to learn more and stay up to date. You'll find info on the rule revision, recorded meetings, and learn how you can take part in the process!

Eww! Are those worms by the pool?

Why yes, yes they are. What you are most likely seeing by the edge of your pool or spa are the larvae of Psychodidae, also known as drain flies.



Adult drain flies have hairy wings and look somewhat like moths. You may see these adult flies hanging out on the walls of your locker rooms or swimming pool. They are poor fliers so generally stay close to the area of origin. Drain flies do not bite humans, but can be a nuisance in your facility and cause concern for your swimmers.

So how do you get rid of drain flies or prevent them from coming to your facility in the first place?

- Control for stagnant water. Decks and locker room floors should drain properly and leave no standing water.
- Regularly scrub the floors to remove any build up of dirt and debris. Removing their breeding grounds and food source will prevent them from multiplying.
- Do not use pesticides that may run into pool water or people may walk through with bare feet.

Routine upkeep is your best line of defense to prevent and control for drain flies.



Curious what we look at during our routine inspections?

You can find our inspection checklist online! Visit tpchd.org/pools and click on Information for Operators.



Door locks—do you know if you are safe or secure?

Some facilities have doors with electronic door locks. If you have an electronic locking system, you need to know if the lock is set to “fail safe” or “fail secure.”

- **Fail safe** means that when there is no power, the door unlocks.
- **Fail secure** means that when there is no power, the door stays locked.

To keep pool areas secure, any door leading into a pool area needs to be set to fail secure. If it cannot be set to fail secure, you need to have a mechanical deadbolt or some other way to lock the door.

Have an electromagnetic door lock?

These locks need constant power to stay locked. If the power cuts off, the magnetic hold releases and unlocks the door. This means they are fail safe. If you don't have a secondary lock and the magnet fails for any reason, you have no way to secure your pool area.

Check your doors and consult the operating manuals. Make sure your doors are fail secure or have a secondary lock.



2024 Pool Operator Classes

Learn how to run a safe pool or hot tub.

We cover pool chemistry and basic operation. This basic class is free. You don't have to register.

- May 15, 9–11 a.m.
- June 13, 9–11 a.m.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Auditorium

3629 S. D St.

Tacoma, WA 98418

Questions?

Contact communitysafety@tpchd.org or (253) 649-1713 for more information.

2024 Fee Updates

Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health adopted the 2024 Fee Schedule on Nov. 1, 2023.

What does this mean for you?

- Seasonal permit—\$543.
- Annual permit—\$868.
- Reinspection fee—\$217.

Your first reinspection is no charge.

- Compliance schedule follow-up—\$217.

If you correct the compliance schedule item by the time of the follow-up, there is no charge.

Questions?

Contact us at communitysafety@tpchd.org or (253) 649-1713.

COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAM

Contact information

We're available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Contact us if you have questions or to schedule a consultation.

Phone..... (253) 649-1713

Email..... communitysafety@tpchd.org



tpchd.org