

Inground Swimming Pools

Who knew...? That the 2nd leading cause of death for children between the ages of 1 and 14 years old was the result of pool related accidents and drowning?! The ways in which we lose these young lives to swimming pool hazards are varied and most, too horrible to describe in any detail here. The fact is there are simple and affordable ways that can greatly reduce that number at our disposal.

For years now people have been told about requirements of the fencing and gates to reduce the hazards of young children's access to backyard pools and pool areas.

My point in this article is to stress the risks of entrapment of swimmers under water, caused by the pools drainage and filtering systems, such as the one that took the life of a six year old boy in Greenwich CT in recent years.

Inground residential pool installations are required to have main drains that are made to lessen the potential for suctioning onto a persons body or causing hair to be entangled, by adding a second main drain to the drain line, more than 3 feet away from the other. Under the State Building Code, residential in-ground pools must be equipped with the system if the permit was applied for after September 1, 2004 commercial pools after December 31, 2005. The water circulating suction lines are fitted with an entrapment avoidance device such as an Atmospheric Vacuum Relief System, (SVRS) which relieves the suction on the line when the drain is blocked. Additionally, public swimming pools and spas must have drain outlet covers that are certified as an ASME /ANSI A112.19.8-2007 safety cover, which has proven effective in reducing the hazards of hair entanglement and entrapment.

The Federal Government passed and President Bush signed into law the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act that went into effect on December 19, 2008, which requires public pools to meet up-graded standards for pool drains. These rules include existing pool installations signifying the importance of these minimum protective measures. These retroactive laws stop short when it involves residential pools, but the risks of injury or death are the same.

As always, the Building Code is a minimum code set in place from years of experiencing the loss of life due to unfortunate circumstances.

Please contact Lincoln White; 860-342-7627 at the Building Department if you have any concerns about your pool or one that you think may not be a safe situation.