



COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Board of County Commissioners

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Volume 5

THE TIDY POOL

May 2011

Reinspection Fees

The health department will begin assessing reinspection fees associated with pools and spas this season due to time spent following up on pool safety and health issues.

The current reinspection fee is \$259.00. The fee will be applied to pools and/or spas that have chemical issues or major safety issues that would result in closure of the pool and/or spa. However the enforcement policy is still being finalized at this time so more details will be available at a later date.

In order to avoid any reinspection fee the pool and/or spa chemicals should always be within the accepted ranges.

If the chemicals deviate from the acceptable ranges it is the operators responsibility to close the facility on their own until the issue has been corrected. Operators should also be testing the pool often enough to know when the pools chemicals are no longer at a safe level.

Also if you notice a major safety issue during the morning inspection of the pool area, such as the gate to the pool not self-closing, then this needs to be corrected immediately.

Free Virginia Graeme Baker Training

The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) is providing a free training on the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act. The event is being provided as part of a partnership between the APSP and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The APSP states the training will lay out the specifics of what you need to know to be fully compliant. Learn the nuts and bolts of VGB compliance and have your questions answered by top industry professionals. Walk away with helpful handouts and a certificate of completion to display to your customers that you care about their safety.

You can register for the event at VGBtraining.com which includes driving directions to the location. The location and dates are below.

If you have not made any upgrades to the pool/spa for the Virginia Graeme Baker law than this would be a good time to get detailed information about the law.

May 11, 2011, 1 - 4 p.m.
Renton Community Center
1715 SE Maple Valley Highway
Renton, WA 98057

Program Contact Info

Environmental Health Lead
Audrey Shaver.....360-414-5592
Pool Program Staff
Vicki Washington.....360-414-5591
Jesse Smith.....360-414-5598
Environmental Health Secretary
Melissa Letos.....360-414-5583
Health Department Main Line
360-414-5599

No Pool Class This Year

We currently are not planning to hold a local pool class this year. For operators who would like some training you may schedule some one on one time with your pool inspector. Contact information for pool program staff is located on this page.

Other options include the Washington State Pool & Spa Conference in Lakewood on May 10th and the Certified Pool Operator Program. Links to that information can be found on the water recreation section the Health Departments webpage.

2010 Most Frequently Cited Violations

This article is a list of the most frequently cited violations during routine inspections for swimming pools and spas in 2010. Please take note that approximately 23% of all routine or follow-up inspections had closure violations observed during the inspection. This is significantly less than the 35% observed during 2009.

Low Disinfectant: The most frequently cited violation in 2010 was for low chlorine levels. Maintaining proper chlorine levels is the primary method of protecting swimming/spa pool users from illness. The chlorine level in pools and spas should be tested frequently to ensure proper levels are maintained at all times. If testing shows levels are not acceptable the pool needs to be closed until adjustments can be made.

Low pH: Maintaining proper pH is one of the most important aspects of having properly balanced pool water and the most effective disinfection levels. Low pH is an irritant to the swimmers and creates corrosive water. Corrosive water damages pool surfaces and corrodes pool equipment such as the heater.

Proper Signage: Swimming pool and/or spa rules signs are required to be posted at all times the facility is open. For examples of the list of rules required to be posted, please see the water recreation section of our website.

Missing Weir Gates: The weir gate is the flapper valve located in the skimmer. It is an automatically adjustable gate that allows the correct amount of water into the skimmer. It also breaks the surface tension of the pool water which helps floating debris get sucked into the skimmer. The gate also helps prevent entrapment hazards from the skimmer itself.

Flow Meter Inoperable: The flow meter should be checked daily to make sure it is operating correctly and that the flow is maintained within the proper range. Water flow that is too low will not allow for adequate turnover of the pool water through the treatment system. Water flow that is too high could lead to improper filtration and entrapment issues with the main drains. When a flow meter is stuck it needs to be cleaned until the bobber fluctuates slightly up and down.

Cyanuric Acid: Cyanuric acid forms a weak bond with chlorine to protect it from the sun's ultraviolet rays to prevent chlorine loss and is used in outdoor pool settings to stabilize chlorine levels. However the cyanuric acid also reduces chlorines effectiveness. Because of this reduction in effectiveness the Department of Health has established a maximum allowable level of 90ppm. If levels of cyanuric acid are on the rise in the swimming pool, the only way to reduce the level is to drain pool water and add fresh tap water. Cyanuric acid is generally not recommended for use in indoor pools and hot tubs.

Maintaining Proper Records:

Records are required to be maintained everyday the pool is open and be kept on file for at least three years. Log sheets are available on our website at http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health/environmentalhealth/living_environment/recwatersafety.htm. Properly maintained pool records can be useful during shift changes, to identify potential problems with the pool and for liability purposes.

Item to be Recorded	Frequency
Chlorine/Bromine	Taken as often as needed to verify they are within acceptable ranges and at least daily
pH	Taken as often as needed to verify they are within acceptable ranges and at least daily
Alkalinity	Weekly
Cyanuric Acid	Weekly (if used)
Spa Pool Temperature	Daily
Flow Rates	Daily
Chemicals Added To Pool	Quantities to be recorded when added to pool
Incidents of known pool water contamination	Whenever incident occurs

Replacing Main Drain Grates

This year a couple of swimming pools replaced main drain grates to comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act. However they installed grates that required four screws but had only two screw hole openings to attach the grates. These grates had to be replaced since they were only using two screws.

Please remember to follow manufacturer instructions when replacing grates. See our webpage for more detailed information regarding upgrades and the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act.

Area Certified Pool Operator Classes

Vancouver	May 12-13	Phil Oaks	360-241-7665
Portland	June 14-15	Lee Engvall	503-858-5352
Portland	October 11-12	Lee Engvall	503-858-5352

Please see www.NSPF.org for more Certified Pool Operator Class Listings.