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INFORMATIONAL RELEASE

SUBJECT: NEWS from CPSC; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; Eight Manufacturers Recall Pool and In-Ground Spa Drain Covers Due to Incorrect Ratings

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is releasing the following information to clarify how the CPSC drain cover recall affects public swimming pools in Michigan. This is given to help pool owners and operators to make an informed decision about dealing with the recall.

CPSC Voluntary Recall

On Thursday, May 26, 2011, the CPSC released a voluntary recall of main drains covers from eight manufacturers. The “hazard” is that the “recalled drain covers were incorrectly rated to handle the flow of water through the cover, which could pose a possible entrapment hazard to swimmers and bathers.” Since December 2008, the federal Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Act of 2007 (VGB Act) has required that suction drain covers be certified to ASME A112.19.8-2007, or successor standards. Several testing laboratories around the country evaluated drain covers from the cover manufacturers and certified that the covers complied with the standard up to a maximum flow rating in gallons per minute. This maximum flow rating is stamped on each cover

DEQ understands that CPSC has investigated and determined that several covers were evaluated and tested incorrectly and thus certified for flow ratings higher than the ASME standard actually allowed. The result is that CPSC issued the voluntary recall and advises that “consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.”

Retrofit or Replacement Covers Not Required for Pools with Two or More Drains

Later in the CPSC recall notice, the paragraph entitled Remedy lists the essential instructions as to how people should respond to this recall. “Pool owners/operators and consumers who have one of the recalled pool or spa drain covers should immediately contact the manufacturer to receive a replacement or retrofit, depending on their make and model. Except for kiddie pools, wading pools and in-ground spas, retrofit or replacement of installed covers are **NOT REQUIRED** [emphasis added] in pools with multiple drain systems or gravity drainage systems or for covers installed before December 19, 2008.”

What DEQ understands this to mean is that retrofit or replacement covers ARE required for pools with only ONE main drain. This also means that retrofit or replacement covers are NOT required for pools with TWO or more drains. For more than 40 years, Michigan has required public swimming pools to have two or more drain covers for each

pump. Pools with only one main drain are extremely rare in Michigan. Except for wading pools and in-ground spas, this recall will apply to extremely few public swimming pools in Michigan.

Flow Ratings

Of the eight manufacturers of recalled drain covers, only four are found in Michigan. These four are AquaStar Pool Products, Hayward Pool Products, Pentair Water Pool & Spa Products, and Waterway Plastics. The Pentair covers are rare in Michigan.

In addition to requiring two covers, Michigan is one of a few states who have a very conservative and safe flow rating for suction covers in our rules that predates the federal requirements. Michigan has required a flow velocity of 1 foot per second through drain covers for 10 years and 2 ft/sec for 30 years prior to that. What this means is that the slower the water flows through the openings in a suction drain cover, the less likely a person will get stuck to a cover. Together with our 2 drain requirement, this means public pools in Michigan **with intact drain covers**, are safer than what is required by the federal standard.

A table follows that illustrates how Michigan flow ratings are very conservative as compared to the ASME certification flow rating. These covers are typical of the drain covers that have been approved in Michigan.

Manufacturer	Model	Drain Shape/Size	Certified Flow Rating (gpm)	Michigan Flow Rating (gpm)
AquaStar	8AV	8" diameter	88	27
AquaStar	WAV9	9" square	224	138
AquaStar	WAV12	12" square	366	261
Hayward	WG 1048E	8" diameter	125	25
Hayward	WG 1031B	9" square	112	56
Hayward	WG 1032B	12" square	256	101
Waterway	640-231X	8" diameter	100	37
Waterway	640-420X	9" square	289	124
Waterway	640-472X	12" square	356	195

The table shows that the Certified Flow Rating is from 1.4 to 5.0 times what we can approve in Michigan. We presume that the Certified Flow Rating for each of these covers will be reduced to flow rates closer to what is already required in Michigan.

All questions about the CPSC drain cover recall should be directed to CPSC Recall Hotline at 800-638-2772. Questions about specific main drain covers should be directed to the drain cover manufacturer. The link to the CPSC drain cover recall notice is <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml11/11230.html>