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Fire-Rescue

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Firefighters ask homeowners to check pool and spa drains during peak summer swimming

**WINTER PARK, FL, an internationally recognized, award-winning city with multiple accredited agencies (July 12, 2022)** The [Winter Park Fire-Rescue Department](#) (WPFDR) is asking its residents and the community to ensure their pool and spa drains have the proper anti-entrapment updates to prevent injury and/or death. It has been nearly fifteen years since the [Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act](#) (P&SS Act) was passed into law. The bill was named in honor of Virginia Graeme Baker who died after being trapped under water by a hot tub drain. It took two adults to free the 7-year-old. It was later estimated the suction pulled at 700 pounds of pressure, making it impossible for the child to free herself.

The law, which went into effect December 2008, required additional safety measures to prevent such a horrendous tragedy from taking place again. In new pools, these features are required by code. But for older pools homeowners should replace old drain covers that are an older flat style drain with suction breaking drain covers.

Pools and spas should have at least one or more safety features in place: 1) an updated drain cover, 2) a second drain, 3) automatic shut-off feature 4) safety valve release. A simple visit to the pool store can make the difference between life and death, for systemic updates consult with a licensed pool contractor.

Factors that contribute to entrapment include long hair, loose clothing, sitting on drains and even diving for toys near drains. WPFDR strongly recommends having designated water watchers (someone responsible to actively watch children) and the following installed:

- proper child locks
- fencing around pools
- water alarms

Drowning remains the leading cause of death among children between the ages of 1-4 and second leading cause of death for children ages 1-14. [Swim lessons](#) are offered by the Parks & Recreation Department at both the Winter Park Community Center and Cady Way pools. Details can be found at [cityofwinterpark.org/swim](http://cityofwinterpark.org/swim).

All parents and caretakers are also strongly encouraged to teach children to stay away from drains and learn CPR. [CPR and other important safety classes](#) are offered by WPFDR throughout the year.

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