The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals®
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FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
DRAIN COVER LIFE EXPECTANCY & REPLACEMENT

Q. How can I determine the life expectancy of installed fittings/covers?

A. The life expectancy in years should be marked on the top surface of the cover/grate. Information can also be obtained from manufacturer literature or by contacting the manufacturer.

Q. If the pool was retrofitted as part of the 2011 recall, is replacement still necessary now?

A. That depends. If a complete new cover/grate was installed then its life expectancy would start from the time of installation. If a riser ring or similar component was installed beneath the existing cover/grate, then you would count from the date of original installation.

Q. Will replacement due to life expectancy be enforced by the CPSC in commercial pools?

A. The CPSC has not issued any statement in this regard. However it is aware of the issue. In addition, the VGB and the APSP-16 (and APSP-7) Standard requires that fittings in public pools be installed in accordance with manufacturer instructions, which include the need to replace when life expectancy is reached.

Q. Can I use existing fasteners when replacing the covers?

A. No. All fittings must be installed with new accompanying fasteners. If they do not fit the existing sump/frame, other changes may be needed.

Q. Can I simply use the same model or one with the same flow rating?

A. If the current model and flow rating are known to be compatible with the sump and circulation system, the same model may be used provided that 1) it was not subject to the 2011 recall, and 2) maximum system flow has not changed (i.e., due to pump replacement). Similarly, if the maximum system flow has increased, it may be necessary to use a different model fitting.

Q. How do I determine if a drain cover is properly rated for a given pool or spa?

A. First, determine the maximum flow capability of the installed circulation system. Each drain cover is assigned a rating which determines the maximum flow in gallons per minute (GPM) that should be allowed to flow through that fitting. This rating is based on testing for body entrapment and hair entrapment under the APSP-16 Suction Fitting Standard. For public facilities, some jurisdiction further limit the flow rating of covers base on water velocity, in these instances you will need to consult local code or the Authority Having Jurisdiction, which may require a permit or other form of approval before work begins.

For single and dual-drain systems the rating for each drain cover must equal or exceed the rating for the pump/pool or spa circulation system. For systems with three or more submerged suction outlets connect together

without a valve capable of isolating one from the others, it may be permissible to combine the flow of all but one outlet; consult the manufacturer's instructions.

Q. Who is responsible for paying for the cost of replacement?

A. All costs and expenses are the responsibility of the pool owner / operator.

VERY IMPORTANT: The ANSI/APSP-7 Standard for Suction Entrapment Avoidance in Swimming Pools, Wading Pools, Spas, Hot Tubs, and Catch Basins includes a variety of tools to assist in the proper evaluation of maximum flow rates, including Appendix B of the Standard. There is a Field Checklist that is also very helpful in identifying other important aspects of suction outlet safety, including fasteners, sumps and drain spacing. The Standard and the Field Checklist are available at APSP.org.

The APSP reminds all pool and spa professionals, as well as owners and operators of public and residential pools, that drain covers must be installed in accordance with manufacturer instructions, including fastening, spacing, and GPM rating. The ANSI/APSP-7 Standard can readily assist in this process, and ensure the proper evaluation and verification of drain covers matched correctly to the maximum system flow rates.