

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

TO: Orange County Public Pool Owners/Operators

SUBJECT: Requirements for the Use of Pool Safety Covers



Prior to the installation of a pool cover, the pool owner/operator shall submit a scale drawing along with the manufacture's specifications to this Agency for review and approval. The Environmental Health Specialist will review all of the literature on the pool cover and verify at the pool site that legal deck clearances will be provided. The pool operator should also be advised to check with the local building department for any additional requirements related to pool covers.

Safety covers are designed primarily as a physical barrier to prevent children from falling into the pool water. As an indirect benefit, safety

covers often help keep the pool water warm, keep leaves and other debris out of the pool, and reduce water evaporation.

The following are required for the installation of all pool safety covers:

- The cover must meet the current American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM F 1346) requirements established for safety covers.
- The cover must be installed and used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and recommendations.
- Handrails must be installed so as not to interfere with the operation of the cover.
- Provision must be made to insure that only responsible parties have access to the pool cover retracting mechanisms. Children should not be allowed to operate the mechanism.
- The cover must be fully retracted prior to the pool being put into use. The cover must also be secured so as not to be partially covered.

Track System Covers

This type of cover utilizes a system that pulls or draws a vinyl or fabric cover off of a reel along tracks that can be mounted on the deck or under the coping. By reversing the switch the cover is rewound on the reel.

• Tracks located on the deck surface must be designed to be trip-resistant and not to exceed a height of 5/8 inch. The track must be of contrasting color to the deck surface.



• The track must be installed far enough away from the coping so as not to interfere with the handhold of the coping, or impeded drainage away from the pool. Screws used to secure the track to the deck must be countersunk.

- The retracting mechanism and its associated housing must be located a minimum of four (4) feet back from the pool edge.
- Activating switches must be installed so that the operator has a clear view of the entire pool surface while the cover is in motion.
- Activating switches must be designed so that the cover will return to the open position it if encounters an obstruction while closing.
- Track systems that are installed under the pool's coping are normally not acceptable, because this type of installation will create a handhold that exceeds the maximum thickness allowed by Code.

Anchored Fabric Covers

These covers are usually made of a Rayon mesh or fabric. They are held in place by anchor points that are sunk into the pool deck. The cover is then stretched tightly across the pool and attached to the anchors by spring loaded straps that are sewn onto the cover.

 The anchor points must be installed in such a manner so as not to present a tripping hazard. The type of anchor system that can be screwed flush with the deck after the cover has been removed or an equivalent must be utilized.



• Once the cover has been removed, it must be locked, secured and stored at least four (4) feet away from the edge of the pool.

As pool cover technology changes, cover systems different from those described may be proposed. Any other type of pool cover not addressed in this informational bulletin should be referred to the Environmental Health Specialist for evaluation.

If at any time a representative from this department observes the pool cover is being used in an unsafe manner it may be ordered removed from the swimming pool or spa and/or the pool may be ordered closed.

For additional information regarding pool covers or pool safety go to:

- Consumer Product Safety Commission: http://www.poolsafety.gov/
- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Safety Standards for Swimming Pools: http://www.astm.org/SNEWS/MARCH_2003/stoner_mar03.html
- Orange County Environmental Health Pool Safety Homepage: http://ochealthinfo.com/regulatory/pool/