

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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CPSC Warning On Drain Grates Of Wading Pools

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission today issued an alert to warn consumers of the risk of disembowelment to children associated with broken grates or missing drain grates on in-ground wading pools.

The Commission is aware of at least five tragic incidents involving children who sat on drain holes and were trapped. The children's intestines were then sucked from their bodies.

A 4-year old Pennsylvania boy suffered permanent injury when he lost 75-80% of his small intestine and his appendix while sitting on a drain hole at a private community wading pool. The grate (cover) to the drain hole had been broken and removed from the pool the day before the accident. In a similar incident in Birmingham, Alabama a 4-year old girl was trapped over a drain hole, and was released from the drain suction only after the wading pool's pump was turned off. Examination revealed that the child's intestines had been sucked from her body.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is investigating these and similar incidents and will take such actions as are needed to prevent further injuries. The Commission is also alerting state and local governments regarding this hazard. The Commission has discussed the potential hazard with the National Spa and Pool Institute (NSPI) and that organization supports CPSC's efforts to alert the public.

Each of the wading pools involved in accidents investigated has a pump that draws the water from the base of the wading pool through the drain hole to the filtering system and then returns the water to the pool. Children are attracted to the hole itself and the sucking action of the drain. The Commission urges parents to closely supervise children using wading pools and not allow them to play with drain holes or covers. The Commission and NSPI urges pool owners, managers and lifeguards to follow a list of precautions issued by the National Spa and Pool Institute as part of the organization's industry standard:

- Shut down the facility if the drain cover is broken, damaged or missing
- Immediately replace or repair broken or missing-drain covers
- Inspect the drain covers (grates) daily to be certain that grates are in good condition, and cannot be removed without the use of tools
- Operators, lifeguards and other pool personnel must know where pump shut-off switches are and have ready access to them