

Questions Trigger Discontinuation of VGBA-Approved Cover **By Kendra Kozen | August 2010 (Aquatics International Website)**

AquaStar Pool Products has ceased selling and manufacturing its VGBA-approved suction outlet cover. The company noted inconsistent product test results and concerns over improper installation, and advises customers that any outstanding product should be returned for replacement with comparable models, according to a July 28th [letter](#) to distributors.

The action affects model no. Model #LP8AVXXX (including model nos. LP8SBxxx, LP8SBVxxx and LP8SBACxxx).

Wade Arens, head of research, testing and technical support for San-Diego-based AquaStar notes that no incidents have occurred as a direct result of this cover and that action was taken out of “an abundance of caution.”

To comply with the [Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act](#), all suction outlet covers must meet the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 standard. That means all product must undergo a series of testing to check for product degradation (due to UV exposure), fastener corrosion, structural soundness and the potential for hair entanglement or body entrapment. Three organizations — The National Sanitation Foundation, Underwriters Lab, and International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials — are approved to carry out testing and certification of the products. This also involves inspecting manufacturing facilities to verify that products are being created uniformly.

However, according to some industry experts, “holes” in the standard cause inconsistent results. For example said Arens, the type of pump used can drastically affect test results from lab to lab, or even at the same lab from week to week.

“We want to be absolutely certain that we’re always going to get safe flow rates,” said Arens. “When we had the product retested recently we discovered that we got variances of 20 to 40 percent depending on how high the cover was installed.”

As a result, the letter also recommended that distributors contact customers to remind them “to verify the installation elevation of this model is a minimum 3/8” from the plaster level to the top of the cover,” and “advise them that we have a free bushing kit available upon request to properly correct any installation at a lower elevation.”