

**YMCA of the USA
Virginia Graeme Baker Act
December 2008**

Talking Points for Ys Moving Toward Compliance

If the media contacts your YMCA regarding the VGBA, only one person from the association should serve as the spokesperson (usually the CEO or Executive Director).

- YMCAs commend the Virginia Graeme Baker Act's intent to increase safety in public pools. Water safety is integral to our history and mission. In fact, historians credit the YMCA with not only creating the first formalized swimming lessons, but also housing the first indoor pool. *[Please ensure that all of your conversations with the media and public begin with this statement, which reiterates our support of the law as well as your commitment to safety.]*
- At the [Name] YMCA, we hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to pool safety. Our swimming pool is safe, meets state bathing codes and is monitored by certified lifeguards at all times.
- Our pool serves [##] people in [Name of community] through life-saving aquatic instruction, rehabilitation therapy, exercise opportunities and competitive swimming events. We hope that our safety record, as well as the steps we have taken towards compliance, encourages our local pool inspector to exercise "enforcement discretion" so we may continue to provide these services without interruption.
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission, the agency responsible for enforcing this law, has said it will focus its enforcement efforts on pools and spas that pose the greatest risk of drain entrapment to children and will encourage state and local health and safety agencies to take the same approach. This specifically refers to:
 - Wading pools
 - Pools designed specifically for young children
 - In-ground spas
 - Pools and spas with flat drain grates and single main drain systems

(If your pool does not fall into one of these categories)

- Our pool does not fall into one of these categories, so we hope to remain operational while we work to comply with the law.

-- OR --

(If your pool does fall into one of these categories)

- We have [##] pools that fall into one of these categories, and we intend to work with our local inspector to determine the best course of action.

(For all pools)

- We worked diligently to comply with the law by the enforcement date of December 19, 2008. Unfortunately, like many other public pools across the country, we are running into challenges due to *[list all that apply: the unavailability of approved drain covers from manufacturers, a shortage of contractors equipped to provide the needed services and confusion about the technical requirements]*.
 - To date our YMCA has: *[outline the actions your YMCA has taken toward compliance, possible answers are below]*
 - Contacted the local inspection agency to confirm that our current drain covers are safe with no missing or broken parts. We are waiting for new drain covers to become available.
- OR --
- Verified that covers are not currently being made for the type of drain in our pool. However, we have contacted the *[Name of local health department/inspection agency]* to confirm that our current drain covers are safe. We will take immediate action as soon as we receive direction on how to best make our current drains compliant.
 - Safety is the utmost priority in YMCA pools. We will continue to work with the *[Name of local health department/inspection agency]* to confirm current drain cover safety, document our efforts toward compliance and educate children to stay away from bottom drains.

Media Statement for Ys Moving Toward Compliance

[YMCA LETTERHEAD]

STATEMENT

Attributable to: [CEO's Name]
CEO, [Name of YMCA]

“The [Name] YMCA reluctantly has closed our swimming pool due to the requirements set forth by the Virginia Graeme Baker Act.

-- OR --

“On [Date], the [Name] YMCA was instructed by [name of local health department/inspection agency] to close our swimming pool due to the requirements set forth by the Virginia Graeme Baker Act.

“The [Name] YMCA commends the Virginia Graeme Baker Act’s intent to increase safety in public pools. Water safety is integral to our history and mission. In fact, historians credit the YMCA with not only creating the first formalized swimming lessons, but also housing the first indoor pool.

“At the [Name] YMCA, we hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to pool safety. Our pool is safe, meets state bathing codes and is monitored by certified lifeguards at all times. It serves [##] people in [Name of community] through life-saving aquatic instruction, rehabilitation therapy, exercise opportunities and competitive swimming events.

“We worked diligently to comply with the law by the enforcement date of December 19, 2008. Unfortunately, like many other public pools across the country, we ran into challenges due to [list all that apply: the unavailability of approved drain covers from manufacturers, a shortage of contractors equipped to provide the needed services and confusion about the technical requirements].

“To date our YMCA has: [outline the actions your YMCA has taken toward compliance, possible answers are below]

- Contacted the local inspection agency to confirm that our current drain covers are safe with no missing or broken parts. We are waiting for new drain covers to become available.

-- OR --

- Verified that covers are not currently being made for the type of drain in our pool. However, we have contacted the local inspection agency to confirm that our current drain covers are safe. We will take immediate action as soon as we receive direction on how to best make our current drains compliant.

“Safety is the utmost priority in YMCA pools. We will continue to work with the [Name of the local health department/inspection agency] to comply with this act, and we look forward to reopening our pool as soon as possible.”

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Talking Points for Ys In Compliance

If the media contacts your YMCA regarding the VGBA, only one person from the association should serve as the spokesperson (usually the CEO or Executive Director).

- YMCAs commend the Virginia Graeme Baker Act's intent to increase safety in public pools. Water safety is integral to our history and mission. In fact, historians credit the YMCA with not only creating the first formalized swimming lessons, but also housing the first indoor pool.
- We met with [*Name of local health department/inspection agency*] and confirmed that our pool drains are in compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Act.
- Our pool serves [##] people in [*Name of community*] through life-saving aquatic instruction, rehabilitation therapy, exercise opportunities and competitive swimming events. We are pleased to be able to offer these services without interruption.
- At the [*Name*] YMCA, we hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to pool safety. Our swimming pool is safe, meets state bathing codes and is monitored by certified lifeguards at all times.

Media Statement for Ys Moving Toward Compliance

[YMCA LETTERHEAD]

STATEMENT

Attributable to:

[CEO's Name]
CEO, [Name of YMCA]

“The [Name] YMCA has met with the [Name of local health department/inspection agency] and confirmed that our pool drains are in compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Act.

“Our pool serves [##] people in [Name of community] through life-saving aquatic instruction, rehabilitation therapy, exercise opportunities and competitive swimming events. We are pleased to be able to offer these services without interruption.

“The YMCA commends the Virginia Graeme Baker Act’s intent to increase safety in public pools. Water safety is integral to our history and mission. In fact, historians credit the YMCA with not only creating the first formalized swimming lessons, but also housing the first indoor pool.

“At the [Name] YMCA, we hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to pool safety. Our swimming pool is safe, meets state bathing codes and is monitored by certified lifeguards at all times.”

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