



Association of Aquatic Professionals

The Association **for** Aquatic Professionals  
**by** Aquatic Professionals

# Association of Aquatic Professionals

## Position Paper: Preventative Facility Maintenance in Aquatic Facilities

### Executive Summary

The Association of Aquatic Professionals (AOAP) recognizes that the safety, health, and operational excellence of aquatic facilities depend on robust preventative maintenance practices. This position paper underscores the critical importance of consistent chemical logging, drain cover/Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act (VGBA) compliance, and proactive equipment upgrades. These best practices are not only foundational for minimizing risks and upholding the standard of care but are also essential for compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, including alignment with the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).

### Introduction

Preventative facility maintenance is the cornerstone of safe and successful aquatic operations. It involves systematic, scheduled actions to prevent equipment failure, mitigate safety hazards, and ensure water quality. Consistent adherence to preventative maintenance not only protects the health and safety of patrons but also reduces operational disruptions and long-term costs.

## 1. Consistent Chemical Logging

### Importance

- **Health and Safety:** Accurate, real-time chemical logging ensures proper water chemistry, essential for pathogen control and swimmer comfort.

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Most jurisdictions mandate chemical record-keeping. MAHC Section 5.7 and many local codes require thorough and accessible chemical logs.
- **Risk Management:** Documented logs provide legal protection and evidence of due diligence in the event of incidents or inspections.

### Recommended Practices

- Record chemical readings (chlorine, pH, alkalinity, etc.) at intervals specified by governing authorities or MAHC recommendations.
- Use digital or paper logs that are secured, tamper-proof, and easily retrievable.
- Train staff to recognize and respond to abnormal readings immediately.

## 2. Drain Cover/VGBA Compliance

### Importance

- **Drowning and Entrapment Prevention:** Improper or non-compliant drain covers are a leading cause of entrapment incidents.
- **Legal Requirements:** The VGBA is federal law. Facilities must ensure all drain covers are third-party certified and not expired (typically 5-7 year lifespan).
- **MAHC Alignment:** MAHC 4.8 and 5.9 set forth detailed standards for suction outlet safety and recordkeeping.

### Recommended Practices

- Inventory all suction fittings and document installation dates and expiration.
- Conduct routine visual inspections for wear, cracks, or tampering.
- Replace covers proactively and retain documentation.
- Train staff on emergency response to entrapment scenarios.

## 3. Preventative Equipment Upgrades

### Importance

- **Operational Reliability:** Aging or obsolete equipment increases the risk of failures, closures, and safety incidents.
- **Cost Savings:** Preventative upgrades reduce emergency repair costs and downtime.

- **Code Compliance:** Many state and local codes, as well as the MAHC, dictate minimum standards for equipment performance and energy efficiency (see MAHC 4.7, 5.7).

## Recommended Practices

- Establish a lifecycle replacement schedule for pumps, filters, chemical feeders, and other critical systems.
- Budget annually for phased upgrades, prioritizing high-risk or non-compliant components.
- Leverage technological advances for improved safety, energy efficiency, and automation.
- Document all upgrades and ensure they are performed by qualified professionals.

## 4. Upholding the Standard of Care

### Why This Matters

- **Legal Duty:** Facility operators have a legal and ethical obligation to provide a safe environment (“standard of care”).
- **Consistency Across Jurisdictions:** Adherence to MAHC and relevant codes ensures best practices are not just met but consistently exceeded, regardless of location.
- **Public Trust:** Demonstrable commitment to the highest standards builds trust with patrons, regulators, and insurers.

### Ensuring Compliance

- Align all policies and procedures with the latest edition of the MAHC and applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- Conduct regular training for all staff on maintenance protocols and regulatory updates.
- Perform routine internal audits and engage third-party inspections for unbiased compliance verification.
- Foster a culture of accountability and transparency in all maintenance and safety operations.

## Conclusion

The Association of Aquatic Professionals urges all aquatic facilities to make preventative maintenance a non-negotiable priority. Consistent chemical logging, vigilant VGBA compliance,

and proactive equipment upgrades are the pillars of safe and sustainable aquatic operations. By rigorously following the Model Aquatic Health Code and all pertinent regulations, facilities not only fulfill their legal and ethical obligations but also advance excellence in public health and aquatic safety.

## References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).
- Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act.
- State and Local Health Department Codes and Regulations.

### **Association of Aquatic Professionals**

*Advancing the standard of care for aquatic facilities nationwide.*