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PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

INFORMATION BULLETIN

INTERPRETATION MANUAL

SPA / TIMER SWITCH / TIMING TOLERANCES



QUESTION:

If 15-minute timer switches have industry manufacturing standards allowing a 5 minute variance, can we allow 15-minute timers to operate up to 20 minutes long without citing violation of OAR 333-062-0175 (4)?

BACKGROUND:

Safety 333-062-0175

- (4) The hydrotherapy pump and air blower shall be connected to a maximum 15 minute timer switch located so as to be inaccessible to bathers in the spa pool.

Some counties have been testing the timers on spa pools to check for their compliance with OAR 333-062-0175 (4). This testing has been a problem, since many of the timers, even when new, allow the spa to run for 16 – 20 minutes. This has caused complaints from the operators about the availability of a timer that will accurately time the 15-minute interval allowed by the rules.

The rule could also be read to say that a timer switch made to measure 15 minutes or less is required. If a timer is manufactured to time up to 15 minutes, not 20 or 30 minutes, then it would meet the intent of the rule.

Of course, from a safety perspective, the most productive solution is to get the spa operator to run their spa at 102° F. (38.9° C.) or less, which would make it safer for a bather to spend significantly more time in the spa.

POLICY / INTERPRETATION

For purposes of compliance with the rules, while recognizing the tolerances of timer manufacturing, we will require a timer that has a maximum setting of 15 minutes. Because of manufacturing tolerances, no enforcement action will be taken if the timer runs for less than 20 minutes. Timers running for 20 minutes or more will be a violation of the rule. If the timer operation is timed, include that information on the inspection write-up.

In addition, all spa owners should be educated on the safety concerns of operating a spa over 102° F. (38.9° C.), particularly those spas with timers that run more than 15 minutes. For most people, the safe amount of time in a spa at 102° F. (38.9° C.) would be considerably longer than 15 minutes.