

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 431 TITLE: Air-conditioning and Mechanical Contractors SPONSOR(S): Albert	COMPANION BILL: SB 322 (McClain) LINKED BILLS: None RELATED BILLS: None
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Committee References

[Industries & Professional Activities](#)

13 Y, 2 N



[Commerce](#)

19 Y, 1 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill revises the definitions of “class A air-conditioning contractor” and “mechanical contractor” to include additional services that they may perform. The services include repair or replacement of existing package pool heaters.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate positive fiscal impact on air-conditioning contractors and mechanical contractors.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill expands the scope of work for [Class A air-conditioning contractors and Mechanical contractors](#) to include repairing and replacing existing package [pool heaters](#). (Section [1](#))

The replacement of an existing package pool heater must use the same make and model as the existing pool heater. The replacement must maintain the flow rate, connection points, and heater specifications without making any modifications to the existing pool piping or system components. The repair and replacement of an existing package pool heater does not include:

- alterations to the [pool's hydraulic system](#);
- the addition of bypass valves;
- installation of new plumbing;
- rerouting of pipes;
- changes to the pool's circulation system; or
- any other modifications beyond what is necessary to disconnect and reconnect the unit to the existing piping. (Section [1](#))

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section [2](#))

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[Class A air-conditioning and Mechanical contractors](#)

Chapter 489, F.S., regulates the profession of contracting in the state. Generally speaking, a licensed contractor

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is the person who, for compensation, undertakes to, submits a bid to, or does himself or herself or by others construct, repair, alter, remodel, add to, demolish, subtract from, or improve any building or structure, and whose job scope is substantially similar to the job scopes described in [s. 489.105, F.S.](#)¹

Construction contractors are either certified or registered by the Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB) housed within Department of Business and Professional Regulation. The CILB is responsible for licensing statewide construction contractors and regulating the construction industry in Florida under part I of Ch. 489, F.S.²

Currently, there are four types of Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) contractors:³

- Class A air-conditioning contractor.
- Class B air-conditioning contractor.
- Class C air-conditioning contractor.
- Mechanical contractors

The scope of work for “Class A air-conditioning contractors” specifically includes services that are unlimited in the execution of contracts requiring the experience, knowledge, and skill to install, maintain, repair, fabricate, alter, extend, or design central air-conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems and to perform other related tasks including replacing, disconnecting, or reconnecting electrical wiring up to an electrical panel and replacing disconnecting, and replacing breakers or fuses dedicated to HVAC circuits.⁴

The scope of work for “Mechanical contractors” specifically includes services that are unlimited in the execution of contracts requiring the experience, knowledge, and skill to install, maintain, repair, fabricate, alter, extend, or design HVAC systems and to perform other tasks, including replacing, disconnecting, or reconnecting electrical wiring up to an electrical panel and replacing disconnecting, and replacing breakers or fuses dedicated to HVAC circuits.⁵

HVAC contractors are not allowed to install or remove pool water heaters, pool equipment, pool piping, or construct pool/spa equipment rooms. However, they are authorized to service and repair pool heaters as long as such service or repair does not include installing or removing the pool heater.⁶

[Pool Circulation System](#)

A pool’s circulation or hydraulic system are the elements of a pool that take water from the pool, filter it, heat it, and return it back into the pool. These elements include:⁷

- Water Outlets – these include any pool opening, such as skimmers, drains, and vacuum ports, where water is taken out of the pool and into the circulation system.

¹ S. [489.105\(3\), F.S.](#)

² S. [489.107, F.S.](#)

³ S. [489.105\(3\), F.S.](#)

⁴ S. [489.105\(3\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

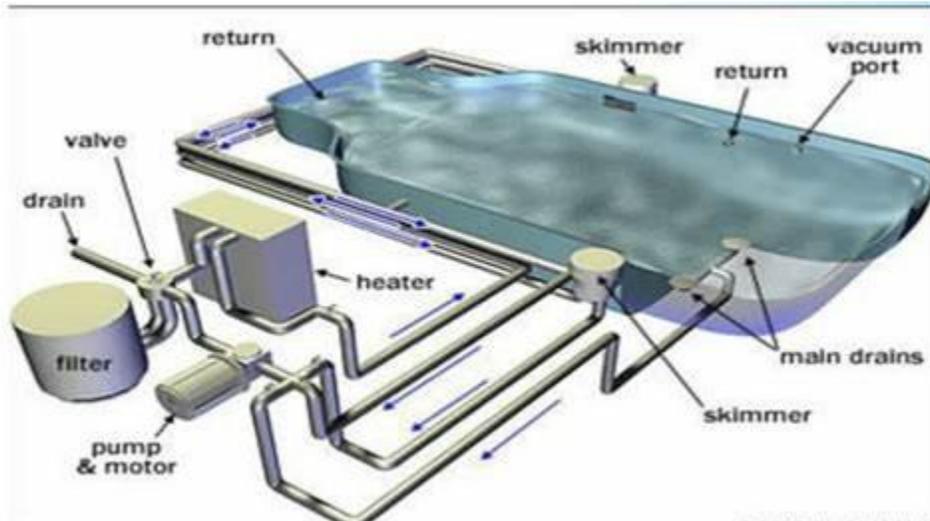
⁵ S. [489.105\(3\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

⁶ Construction Industry Licensing Board, Declaratory Statements [2012-024](#), [2014-006](#); [2014-060](#);

⁷ Capitol Pools. *Understanding the Pool Circulation System*, <https://www.capitolpool.com/service/operating-poolcirculation#:~:text=Your%20pool%E2%80%99s%20circulation%20system%20is%20the%20elements%20of.and%20what%20you%20need%20to%20do%20with%20them> (last visited December 2, 2025); R&R Pools, *What Causes Poor Pool Circulation* <https://www.rrpools.ca/blog/causes-poor-pool-circulation/> (last visited December 2, 2025).

- Circulation Pump – the pump is responsible for pulling water out of the pool, through the circulation system, and back into the pool.
- Filter – cleans the water by removing dirt, debris, and bacteria from the pool water. Water is directed through the filter via a valve.
- Heater – heats the pool water and may include bypass valves⁸, which allow water to bypass the heater.
- Returns – these are openings in the pool where water flows back into the pool from the circulation system.

A pool's flow rate is the speed at which the water travels through the circulation system, and the turnover time is the time it takes for the volume of water in the pool to make one pass through the circulation system.⁹



Pool Heaters

Generally, the pool's circulation system pulls water from the pool and into the pool heater, which warms the water via a heat exchange, and then circulates the heated water back into the pool. There are three main types of pool heaters:¹⁰

Electric heat pumps

Electric heat pumps use electricity to pull in outside air to heat the water. The heater has a fan that draws in the surrounding warm air. The air is directed to an evaporator coil containing freon, which pulls the heat from the outside air and turns the freon into a gas. The warm gas moves through a compressor, which further increases the temperature, and then moves through the condenser coil, which absorbs the heat and warms the water. As the hot

⁸ Swimmingpoolsteve, *What is a Pool Heater Bypass?*

<https://www.swimmingpoolsteve.com/pages/bypass1.html#:~:text=An%20external%20bypass%20is%20a%20configuratio%20of%20pool,your%20breakpoint%20chlorination%20to%20remove%20spent%20chlorine%20%28c> (last visited December 2, 2025).

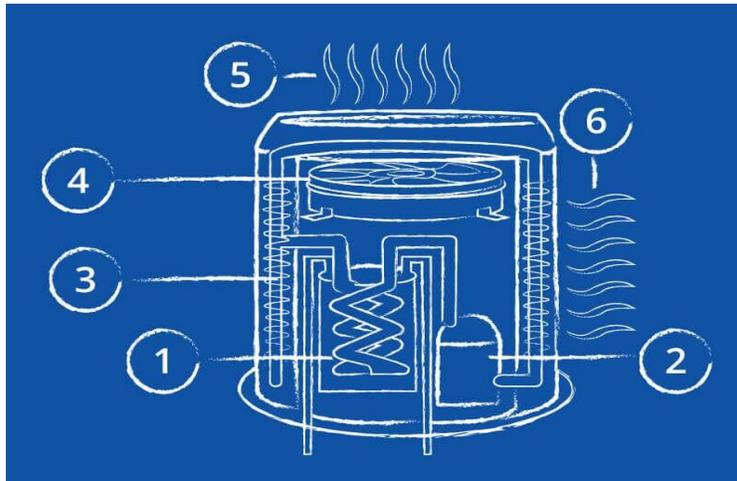
⁹ Stockwell Safety, *Flow Rate and Turnover*, [https://www.stockwellassociates.co.uk/tutorial-flow-rate-and-turnover.php#:~:text=Flow%20rate%20refers%20to%20the,litres%20per%20minute%20\(LPM\)](https://www.stockwellassociates.co.uk/tutorial-flow-rate-and-turnover.php#:~:text=Flow%20rate%20refers%20to%20the,litres%20per%20minute%20(LPM)) (last visited December 2, 2025).

¹⁰ Scott Keller, *How Does a Pool Heater Work: A Comprehensive Guide to Pool Heating Options and Efficiency*, Love Gunite Pool, (September 18, 2024) <https://lovegunitepool.com/how-does-a-pool-heater-work/> (last visited December 2, 2025);

Hank Cooper, *How Gas Pool Heaters Work? Unveiling the Science behind Your Warm Swim* (July 26, 2024)

<https://pooltipsusa.com/how-gas-pool-heaters-work-unveiling-the-science-behind-your-warm-swim/> (last visited December 2, 2025).

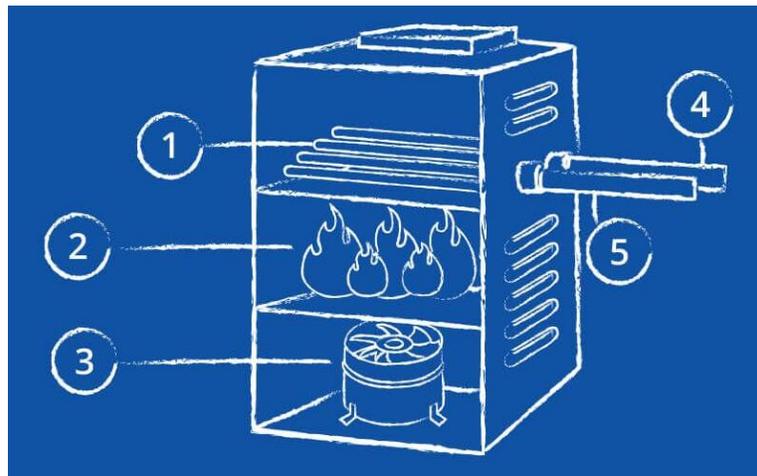
gas moves through the condenser coil, it turns back into a liquid, and returns to the evaporator coil, and the process begins again as diagrammed below:¹¹



1) Condenser, 2) Compressor, 3) Evaporation Coil, 4) Fan, 5) Cool Air 6) Warm Air

Gas pool heaters

Gas pool heaters work by burning natural gas or propane inside a combustion chamber. There are copper coils in the heater, which heat up from the burning gas. Water is pulled into the heated copper coils by the circulation pump, which then pulls the heated water back into the pool as diagrammed below:¹²



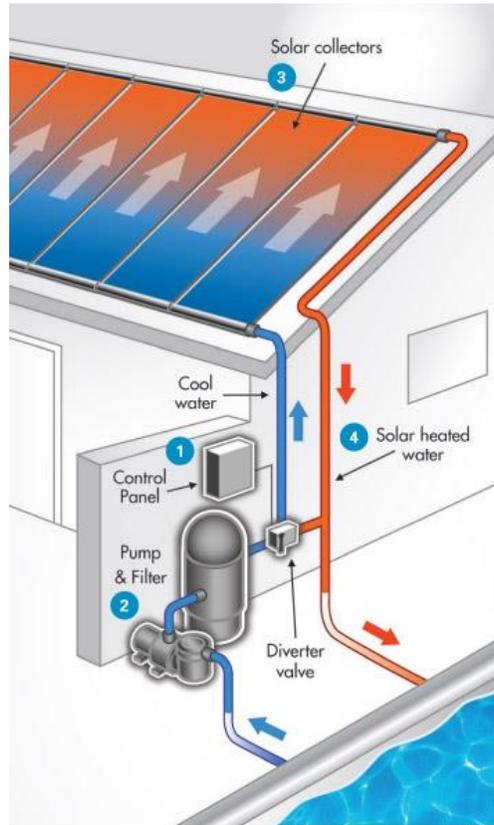
1) Heated Copper Coils 2) Burner 3) Fan 4) Cold Pool Water Entry 5) Heated Water Exit

¹¹ Jessica Carter, *Do pool heat pumps use a lot of electricity?* Eclipse Pool Heating (August 9, 2022) <https://eclipsepoolheating.com.au/2022/08/09/do-pool-heat-pumps-use-a-lot-of-electricity/> (last visited December 2, 2025); Michael Dean, *How Does a Pool Heater Work?* Pool Research (August 13, 2024) <https://poolresearch.com/how-heaters-work/> (last visited December 2, 2025)

¹² Michael Dean, *supra* note 8.

Solar pool heaters

Solar pool heaters work by using a solar collector, which warms the water with solar power. The circulation pump pulls the water into the solar collector, which is then pulled back into the pool as diagrammed below:¹³



BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee	13 Y, 2 N	1/14/2026	Anstead	Miralia
Commerce Committee	19 Y, 1 N	2/18/2026	Hamon	Miralia

¹³ Performance Solar, *How Solar Pool Heating Works*, <https://performancesolar.com/solar-pool-heating/> (last visited December 2, 2025); David Stillwell, *How does a solar pool heater work?* (September 6, 2023) Consumer Affairs <https://www.consumeraffairs.com/solar-energy/how-does-a-solar-pool-heater-work.html> (last visited December 2, 2025).