

Pool Fence Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions

Inadequate pool fencing continues to be a major contributing factor in the rate of drowning among children under 5 years of age. Please be aware that pool fencing legislation is different in all the states and territories within Australia and the information in this fact sheet relates to NSW only.

Pool Fencing Laws

The Swimming Pool Act 1992 prescribes the requirements for child-resistant barriers depending on when the pool was built and where the pool is located.

- Pools built prior to 1 September 2008:
The pool is to be surrounded by a fence that separates the pool from the house and any structure not associated with the swimming pool. The standard for a compliant pool fence is prescribed by AS1926.1 1986.
- Pools built before 1 August 1990 or 1 July 2010 if on a small property (less than 230m²):
Access to the pool from the house must be restricted at all times – this includes windows and doors restricted in accordance with AS1926.1 - 2007.
- Pools built after 1 August 1990 but before 1 July 2010 on a large property only (2 hectares or more):
All new pools must be surrounded by a fence that separates the pool from the house.

*Please note the above three exemptions cease to apply if the barrier has been substantially altered or rebuilt. Detailed evidence is required to demonstrate that any exemption still applies.

- Pools in any other circumstances:
The pool is to be surrounded by a fence that separates the pool from the house and any structure not associated with the swimming pool. The standard for a complaint pool fence is prescribed in AS1926.1- 2012.

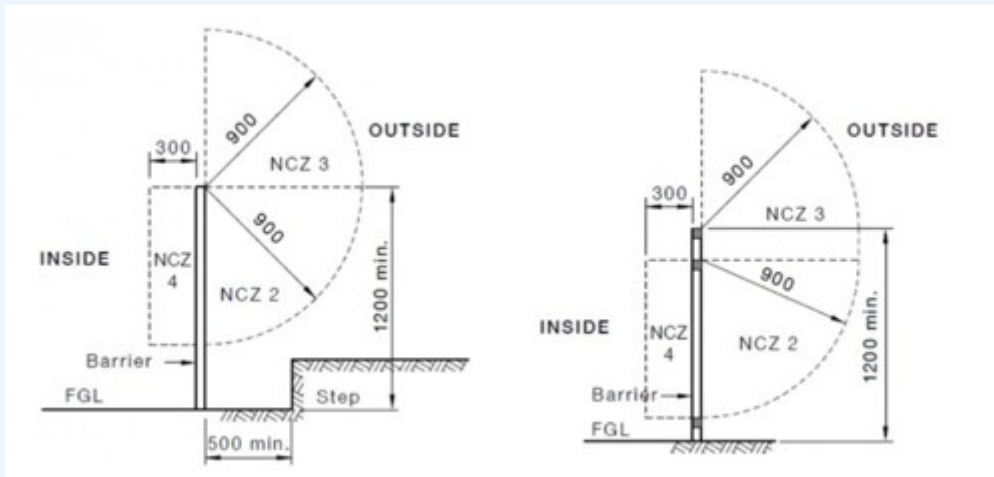
Barrier Standards

Pool fencing must comply with the following:

- Height of the pool fence must be a minimum 1200mm above the finished ground level as measured from the outside face. If the barrier is not less than 1800mm in height than NCZ's do not apply and the barrier may be climbable on either or both sides.
- Gaps under the barrier and any vertical bars must not be greater than 100mm.
- The barrier must not have hand/foot holds that permit climbing.

Non-climbable Zone (NCZ)

Trees, shrubs or any other objects such as a barbeque, pot plant, toys, ladder and chairs must not be within the determined NCZ's to prevent children climbing the barrier. If the boundary fence is used as part of the barrier, it must have a height of not less than 1800mm measured from the inside and have a NCZ, formed by a 900mm arc down from the top of the barrier. NCZ's are demonstrated in the below figure:



Child Resistant Doors and Windows

Child resistant doors can only be installed for access to an indoor pool. That is, a door from a dwelling leading directly into a pool area is not permitted unless an exemption applies. If permitted, the door must:

- Be self-closing.
- Be self-latching.
- Have the latching device at least 1500mm above the ground.
- Have a NCZ to the outside face of the door up to 1200mm above the finished ground level. This requires no hand or footholds, for example a standard screen door is unlikely to comply.
- No pet doors or similar openings.

A window that opens directly into a pool area that has a height of 1800mm or more, as measured from the finished ground level in the pool area, does not require protection. Please note, this is in relation to swimming pool barrier safety however the Building Code of Australia may require fall protection from 2 metres or more.

If the measurement is less than 1800mm, the window must be covered by a secure screen or the openable portion of the window restricted to open no more than 100mm. Any restriction(s) must only be removed by the use of a tool.

Gate Operating and Latching

Pool gates are to:

- Swing outwards, away from the pool area.
- Be fitted with a self-closing device. This device should ensure closure from any position.
- Have a latch that automatically operates on the closing of the gate. The latch is to be a minimum 1500mm above the ground level unless located on the inside of the gate and in a position where it is required to reach over and down the barrier by 150mm. Shielding is required for barriers that have openings.
- Have no device for holding it in the open position. Under no circumstances are pool gates to be 'propped' open.

Warning Notices

Swimming pools are to have a sign(s) in a prominent location that contains the following:

- The words 'Young children should be actively supervised when using this swimming pool', 'pool gates must be kept closed at all times' and 'keep articles, objects and structures clear of the pool fence at all times'.
- A simple flow chart containing details of resuscitation techniques in accordance with the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Guideline.
- A statement to the effect that formal instruction in resuscitation is essential.
- The name of the organisation that published the sign and date of publication.

Pool Fence and Gate Maintenance

All fence bolts, screws and fixtures must be tight and in good repair. Any loose elements of the barrier should be tightened and replaced as a matter of priority to ensure ongoing compliance. Self-closing gate hinges and latches should have a suitable lubricant frequently applied and adjustments as needed to ensure automatic closure. Any manufacturers instructions or maintenance advice should be followed. Appropriate maintenance prevents faults occurring which may lead to ineffective and unsafe protection of the pool area.

If any non-compliances exist, rectification should be undertaken urgently.

This may require the engagement of a suitable contractor to advise on and undertake suitable solutions.