

DROWNING IS SILENT – SUPERVISE

General Information

A pool is a wonderful asset for the home and family, but pools can also be a potential danger for young children. Private Swimming pools are the single most significant water danger for preschoolers according to Water Safety New Zealand drowning statistics.

Almost half of children under the age of five who drown or suffer serious injury from immersion do so in domestic swimming pools.

To protect young children from the damage of immersion injury or drowning, all domestic pools and spa pools in New Zealand are required to be

fenced under the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987).

A pool is defined as any excavation, structure or product containing water over 400mm deep that is used or is capable of being used for swimming, wading, paddling or bathing and includes spas and inflatable pools. Pools must remain empty until an approved complying fence is installed. A building consent from Council is required for the construction of pools and pool fencing. In some cases a resource consent may also be required.

It is a requirement that, pools and the

immediate pool area are surrounded by fencing to prevent the access of young children to the pool. The fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987) requires all pool, spa and hot tub owners to notify their local authority. Further guidance regarding the process of consent application for both spa pools and swimming pools can be found on the Council's website www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz.

If you have any queries about your application please contact the Building Department on 03 546 0200 or via enquiry@ncc.govt.nz.

Pool Fencing Guidelines

This checklist is a broad guide for meeting general pool fencing requirements. It does not however, cover every situation and further advice can be sought from the Council. A full schedule of requirements under the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987) and the New Zealand Building Code can be viewed at www.watersafe.org.nz.

Pool fencing should prevent children up to six years old from climbing over, under or through it to gain access to a pool. Check that:

- Portable spa pools, inflatable and kit set pools – Have a pool safety fence prior to filling, unless a Special Exemption is granted by Council. NZS 8500:2006 provides guidance for special exemptions.
- The pool has complying fencing.
- No space under the bottom of the gate or fence is greater than 100mm at any point.
- Horizontal support rails are at least 900mm apart.

- All fencing is at least 1200mm high at its lowest point.
- There are no holes or gaps in the fence that may provide child access to the pool area.
- Hinges, automatic closing devices and latches work properly at all times. Hinges must not provide a 'climbing point' for young children.
- Gates and doors must open away from the pool and have self latching and self closing devices that automatically close and latch from any stationery position 150mm or more from the closed position. Where latches are accessible they must be at least 1.5m above finished ground / floor level.
- Any windows in walls forming part of the pool fence that are less than 1200mm from the floor do not open more than 100mm.
- There are no objects close to the pool fence or otherwise accessible that could assist young children climbing the fence.

Where the property boundary fence forms part of the pool fence, check that:

- o Horizontal supports on the neighbour's side of the fence are no less than 900mm apart.
- o There are no objects like compost bins, firewood stacks or similar that could assist young children climbing the fence.
- o There are no trees that could assist young children climbing the fence.
- o The immediate pool area can only be used for pool activities and cannot include a children's play area, a thoroughfare, clothes lines, vegetable gardens etc.

When installing a pool fence, it is recommended that you use a reputable fencing contractor who knows the New Zealand pool fencing requirements.

If you are unsure whether your pool fence complies, or if you want to find out the current status of a pool please contact your local council.

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Design and Construction

FENCING

The fence must surround the immediate pool area and should be constructed so that it prevents a young child from accessing the pool at any point. The immediate pool area is defined as that area used for activities relating only to the use of the pool.

Height

The minimum height for a pool fence is 1.2 metres above ground level. No space under the bottom of the gate or fence can be greater than 100mm from the ground at any point.

Types of materials

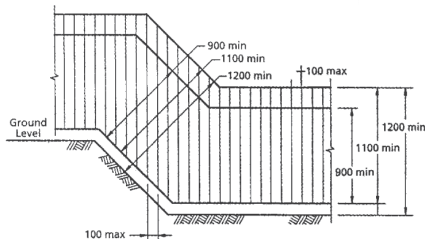
Fences can be constructed from any type of material provided it is durable and complies with the New Zealand Building Code. Living vegetation or hedges are not acceptable as pool fences.

Perforated materials like netting or mesh can be used provided:

- No opening in the perforated material is greater than 10mm (diameter) for a fence up to 1.2 metres high or 50mm (diameter) for a fence over 1.8 metres high.

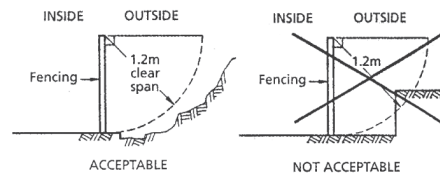
Construction

All horizontal rails, bracing etc that could be used for climbing must be at least 900mm apart. If less than 900mm apart, they should be on the inside of the fence or covered by an acceptable, non-climbable material.

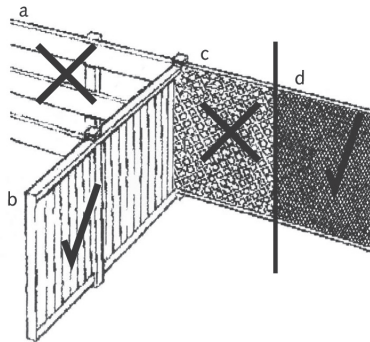


Spacing between vertical uprights must not exceed 100mm at any point.

Any permanent structures on the outside of the fence that could be used for climbing must be at least 1.2 metres from the fence.



- X Horizontal construction provides footholds to assist climbing.
- ✓ Vertical construction has no footholds to assist climbing.
- X Trellis fence may be easy to climb – a solution would be to attach a non-climbable netting or mesh.
- ✓ Covered shade cloth eliminates any climbing access on the trellis fence.



Above ground pools

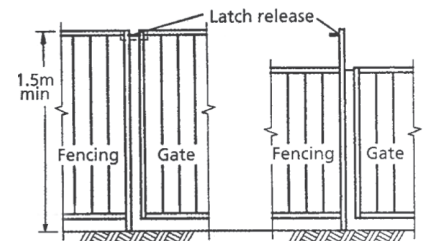
The walls of an above ground pool are considered an effective barrier if they are at least 1.2 metres high and provide no climbable holds. If the pool has a ladder, it will need to be appropriately fenced.

GATES AND LATCHES

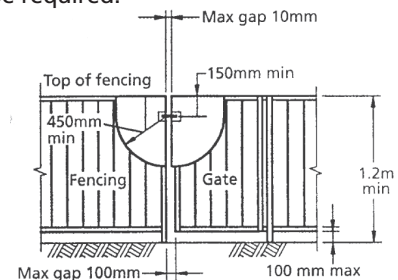
Gates must be hung so that they:

- Swing outwards and away from the pool area.
- Are clear of anything that could hold them open.
- Cannot be lifted off the hinges.
- Cannot be unlatched if pulled down or lifted up.
- Self close without assistance when released from 150mm or more from the closed position.

All gates must be fitted with a latch that operates automatically on closing and prevents the gate from reopening. Latches should be 1.5 metres from the ground or any permanent projections, and preferably fixed on a raised post.



If the latch is on the inside of the fence it should only be accessible by reaching over the top of the fence. On gates of open construction a latch shield will be required.



YOUR POOL. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Drowning prevention strategies

SUPERVISION

Many drownings occur in the few moments that parents or caregivers are distracted. Take your child with you whenever you leave the pool. Never leave them alone.

What is correct supervision?

- **Constant** visual contact – watch children in or near water constantly.
- **Proximity** – Stay **within arm's reach** of a non-swimmer and under 5's.
- **No distractions** – Not being **distracted** by anything e.g. ringing phones and doorbells.
- **Readiness to respond** – Be **ready** to respond quickly, learn child CPR.

Always designate a responsible adult supervisor over the age of 16 years.

WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Teach your child about water safety, implement rules around the pool.
- Teach your child swimming and survival skills.
- Remove toys from the pool after use.
- Never prop safety gates or doors open.
- Never allow children in the pool area without a responsible adult.
- Be alert when visiting a home with a pool.
- Complete a Basic Life Support (CPR) course.

Contact 0800 FIRST AID for details. Take a phone to the pool for emergency purposes only.