



Swimming pool fencing guidelines

New rules for swimming and spa pool fencing put in place by the Government effective from 1 January 2017, are aimed at reducing the number of children drowning in pools. It also provides consistent rules for the whole country. The rules are now part of the Building Act 2004, and the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 is no longer applicable.

There are some important changes for pool owners to be aware of as you may need to build a new/additional fence, adjust a current fence, or have a lockable cover. In addition, all pools in New Zealand now need to be inspected every three years by Council to proactively make sure safety measures are correctly in place.

The new rules apply to all swimming pools capable of holding more than 40 centimetres in depth and any spa pool more than 5 square metres in area or less than 76 centimetres in height (and includes inflatable/portable pools). Spa pools 5 square metres or less in area require a lockable lid, larger spa pools require fencing.

If you have an existing swimming pool the following guide will help you ensure your fencing is compliant:

- All materials and components of a fence should be of a durable nature and constructed so as to prevent a child from climbing over or crawling under the fence from the outside.
- Fences shall extend a minimum of 1.2m above the ground around the pool and any pool projections.
- If a fence is to be constructed of a perforated material, netting or mesh which has a dimension greater than 10mm, the fence shall extend 1.8m above ground level or pool projections. The maximum size opening of any perforated material, netting or mesh, excluding circumference or perimeter is 50mm.
- This will include diagonal measurements. Pool projections also mean objects permanently placed on the ground within 1.2m of the fence and includes trees etc.
- Such materials must be fixed at the top and bottom, or be of such a nature, that the fence cannot be readily crossed by children under the age of six years.
- Any clearance between the bottom of the fence and gate and ground level shall not exceed 100mm.
- The spacing between adjacent vertical poles, panels or other posts shall not exceed 100mm at any point. All fencing supports, nails, rods, wires, bracing or other similar posts shall be on the inside of the fence and be inaccessible for use for climbing from the outside. Horizontal rails should be at least 900mm apart.
- Gates shall not open into the pool area and must be fitted with an automatic closer capable of returning the gate to the closed position and operating a child-proof latching device. The latching device should be mounted on the inside of the gate at a height of 1.2m above ground level or on the outside of the gate at a height of 1.5m above ground level.

- Where a building forms part of a fence and the pool is not contained within the building, any door that gives access to the immediate pool area will be required to be fitted with a locking device that when properly operated, prevents the door from being readily opened by a child under the age of six years.
- This also applies to an opening window if any part of the sash is within 1.2m of the floor, and must be fitted with a window restrictor so that it cannot open more than 100mm or be lockable. The immediate pool area must not contain vegetable gardens, clotheslines, children's sandpits, slides, swings etc.
- The fence should also be situated to prevent children from moving directly to the pool from the house.

This is only a guide to the fencing requirements and does not cover all situations or aspects of the fencing requirements.

If you own a pool and have not been contacted by Council, or if you have any questions regarding pool fencing you can contact us by email info@waitomo.govt.nz or phone (07) 878 0800.