



Money is not the only penalty if your Barrier does NOT comply!

Checklist for pool barriers

Appropriately designed and installed swimming pool or spa barriers are an effective measure to prevent young children from drowning. It is alarming, however, the number of young children that still drown in swimming or spa pools because the selected barrier is not maintained to be functional at **all** times.

Regular checking that your selected pool barrier performs the function it was installed for is a major strategy to reducing the chance a young child will be able to enter the pool area unsupervised and become exposed to a potentially hazardous situation.

For more detailed information regarding the minimum requirements for barrier locations and design requirements please refer to the Rules for Pools document.

Maintenance checks should be performed on a regular basis and at least twice a year, in particular prior to the start of the summer season.

Tick the box if your answer is YES. If all boxes are ticked you are maintaining a functional barrier. Expert advice should be sought from your Local Government or The Royal Life Saving Society Australia if you are in doubt.

Check barrier design features

- Do you have a pool barrier that restricts access to the pool from the neighbouring property or land?
- If the installation was approved on or after November 5 2001, is a barrier installed that separates the house from the pool area?
- If the installation was approved on or before November 4 2001, are doors that form part of the barrier self closing and latching?
- Is the outside of the pool barrier at least 1200 millimetres high all the way around?
- Is the bottom of the pool barrier not more than 100 millimetres off the ground all the way around?
- Is the surface directly beneath the pool barrier stable and not able to be eroded?
- Are all vertical or near vertical members of the barrier not more than 100 millimetres apart?
- Are all horizontal or near horizontal surfaces that form part of the barrier at least 900 millimetres apart?
- Is the top of the pool barrier at least 1100 millimetres above the highest of any of the lower horizontal surface/member?
- Is the pool barrier well maintained (ie. no holes, loose or broken members, etc.)?
- Is the top of the pool barrier at least 1200 millimetres away from any object that would enable a young child to climb over the fence (e.g. BBQs, trees, rocks, shrubs, deckchairs, garden retaining walls, pool pumps and housing)?

Check the pool gate

The design of a pool gate must as a minimum meet the same design requirements as the previous checklist for general barrier requirements. As the gate is not a fixed barrier it must meet the following requirements:

Does the pool gate:

- Close by itself from any open position, including when resting on the latch?
- Have a self latching device that automatically secures the gate in the closed position immediately after opening?
- Latch securely when closing?
- Open in a direction away from the pool?
- Never get propped open/tied back or otherwise be obstructed from automatically closing?
- Have the mechanism to release the latching device at least 1500 millimetres above the ground or have a shielded latch (so a young child cannot open the gate)?
- Is the latch release mechanism at least 1400 millimetres above the highest lower horizontal surface?



Check the windows

Check any windows that could allow a child to go from your house directly or indirectly to the pool area.

- Is the bottom of the lowest openable panel of the window at least 1200 millimetres above floor surface when measured from the inside?
- Are they child resistant (so a small child cannot get through)?

Child resistant means having no gaps greater than 100 millimetres or mesh security screens. Permanent fixing of windows to open not more than 100mm is an acceptable option (including for Hopper Style windows).

Check the doors

If the pool was approved for building on or after November 5 2001, there should be no such doors, unless your local council has granted approval for the use of a door.

Doors are only permissible as part of a barrier if approval for the installation was received on or before November 4 2001.

Do all doors that could allow a child to go from a premise (ie house) directly or indirectly to the pool area:

- Have a self latching device that automatically secures the door in the closed position, immediately after opening?
- Have a mechanism to release the latching device located at least 1500 millimetres above the floor level?
- Not contain any footholds on the door or door frame (architrave) wider than 10mm between the release mechanism for the door and any point 100 millimetres above finished inside floor level.

Pet access flaps built into doors are difficult to make comply and are not encouraged to be placed in a door that is a permissible part of the barrier. If present the openings shall not exceed 100mm in a vertical or horizontal direction.

What about above ground swimming or spa pools?

- Are the walls of your pool at least 1200 mm high all the way around?
- Is the side of the pool free of bracing, indents, projections, filtration equipment, etc?
- Is any ladder, step entry and filtration equipment enclosed by a barrier with a self-closing gate?

Do you own a pool/spa approved for installation on or before June 30 1992?

In Western Australia, between 1988 – 2000, 43% of young children drowned in swimming or spa pools that were approved for installation on or before June 30 1992. These pools have in the past only been required to restrict access from outside the property and not from the premises.

Given the significance of young child drowning in these swimming pools, the State Government on March 18 2002 introduced regulations that increases the requirements of where child resistant barriers must be located. The goal of these requirements is to ensure that young children whom reside in or visit these older properties are afforded a higher level of protection from accidental drowning.

Pools approved for building prior to July 1992 must ensure that access is restricted from the house to the pool area with the use of a separation barrier as the recommended option.

These upgrades (Transitional Period) must be completed by December 17 2006 or within three months of the property settlement date if the property is sold before the Transitional Period expires.

Avoid the Ultimate Penalty-

- Check your pool gate and barrier regularly
- Ask your Local Government pool inspector for advice on upgrading your barrier if you have a Transitional Period swimming pool.
- Ask your Local Government for advice if you substantially alter the make up of your barrier.
- Contact your Local Government pool inspector when you know that they will be in your area to allow a smooth inspection process.
- Educate family members and friends about the rules of use of the swimming pool including maintaining secure access points.
- Put an emergency resuscitation flow chart in your swimming pool area to assist during an emergency.
- Bookmark and visit RLSSA's web-site www.poolsafety.com.au for all your pool safety needs.



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