

Enjoy your pool or spa, while always being conscious of safety.

A pool is just like any other type of playground and exercise equipment. Pool and spa owners can enjoy the benefits, but they also need to be safety conscious.

POOL FENCING

Swimming pool regulations require that all swimming pools and spas must be fenced. Fences must be at least 1.2m high and separate the pool from residential buildings and neighbouring properties. Gates must be self-closing and self-latching, and open away from the pool.

Remember:

- Fencing requirements must be met prior to filling the pool.
- Fencing and gates should be checked periodically and must be maintained to ensure they continue to satisfy the regulations.
- Don't leave furniture or other items that children can climb on near your pool fence or above-ground pool.

POOL COVERS

Pool covers are not designed to stop children getting into the pool. Rigid covers may provide a greater barrier but even they are not totally child-proof. Soft covers can give the illusion of being solid but if a child walks on them they will sag and create a pond deep enough to be dangerous.

When the pool is being used, the cover should never be left partially over the pool. If trapped under the cover a child may not be seen.

Remember:

- Pool covers should never be considered a substitute for a fence or proper supervision.

SPASA GUIDELINES

The backyard swimming pool is an Australian icon that for many years has provided good times and healthy recreation for people of all ages.

While swimming pools allow us to get together with our friends and family to share fun, fitness and relaxation, they can also pose a risk. There are some easy to remember rules that need to be followed to ensure the safe use of swimming pools and spas at all times.

SPASA recommends these safety guidelines be followed at all times:

- Supervise children at all times around water. If you need to leave the pool or water area, even for a moment, take the child with you.
- Make sure your pool or spa has compliant fencing and childproof locking. Always remember that a swimming pool fence is not a substitute for supervision.
- Don't leave furniture or other items accessible that children can climb on near your pool or spa fence.
- Be aware that hair, bathing suit strings and tassels, or body parts can become entangled in an improperly covered drain or suction point.
- Display a resuscitation chart on your pool fence and take a CPR course so you will know what to do in an emergency.

- Familiarise children with water by taking them to swimming lessons at the local pool.
- Make sure all pool users are warned against sitting on, or covering, a drain or suction point. This can cause injury, or in extreme cases, death.
- Empty paddling pools, baths, basins, sinks and troughs when they are not in use.
- Never take your eyes off children when they are in or around water. It only takes a few seconds for a child to drown.
- Alcohol and swimming don't mix. Never drink around water.
- Most backyard pools are too shallow for diving. Place "No Diving" signs prominently around your pool.
- Be aware that poorly designed pools and spas can create an entrapment hazard. Get a registered pool builder or building surveyor to check your pool or spa to ensure safety, replace broken or missing suction covers and have anti-entrapment covers fitted if needed.
- Never put your head under water when in a spa.

The following websites are also recommended for more useful information:

- www.kidsafevic.com.au
- www.watersafety.vic.gov.au
- www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au
- www.buildingcommission.com.au