

FACT SHEET 2 • SAFETY BARRIERS

Pools & spas are great fun and very tempting for curious children. Every pool & spa must have a barrier and every child must be supervised

Pool and spa barriers are required by legislation for any swimming pool or spa in excess of 300mm in depth and must be maintained for the life of the pool or spa, this includes keeping the area around the safety barrier free from climbable objects or plants that can be used to gain access to the pool area.

The key elements of the relevant Australian Standard, A.S. 1926.1-2012 are designed to restrict access by unsupervised young children, especially those under 5 years of age, to the swimming pool area.

SAFETY BARRIERS

Essentially, a safety barrier can be made of any material that has a reasonable life span when exposed to the likely conditions of weather, pool chemicals, pollution, decay, insects, salt water spray, impacts, etc.

Safety barriers must have an effective perpendicular minimum height of 1.2 metres. Existing boundary fences can be used as a safety barrier provided that they are well maintained, at least 1800mm high measured on the inside of the barrier to a solid finished surface and have no climbable elements within 900mm measured from the top of the inside of the fence.

GATES

These must open outward only (away from the pool area) and have an effective perpendicular minimum height of 1.2 metres.

They must return to the closed position and engage the latch automatically from any position and not re-open without using the manual release mechanism. The latch release must be at least 1.5 metres above ground level unless it (i) is inside the fence (ii) can only be reached over or through a fence higher than 1.2 metres or (iii) is 300mm below the fence top (no hand hole) or at least 150mm away from the edge of any hand hole opening. Latch releases less than 1.5 metres above ground level must be shielded so that no opening greater than 10mm is closer than 450mm. Any hand hole shall be at least 1.2 metres above ground level.

WALLS

External walls of a building can be used as swimming pool barriers so long as they do not contain any doors opening into the pool area and windows are treated to prevent access to the pool area.

DOORS & WINDOWS

Doors from a dwelling are prohibited from opening into a swimming pool area. The only exception is for doors opening directly to an indoor swimming pool or spa.

Acceptable window fixing treatments are as follows:

- Those totally enclosed by screw fixed security screens that can only be removed by the use of a tool
- Those that are fixed so the window cannot open more than 100mm max
- Those with a lowest opening panel not less than 1.8 above the ground level to the pool area
- Those that have firm fixed metal fly-wire installed that is fixed to the building with fasteners that can only be removed by the use of a tool

This is only a general summary of A.S 1926.1. Please refer to your local SPASA member or the VBA for more information.

