

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 pre-schoolers according to Water Safety New Zealand drowning statistics.

In the Auckland region 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 danger of immersion injury or drowning, all domestic pools in New Zealand are required to be fenced under the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987). Guidance may be obtained from NZS 8500:2006.

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 spa and inflatable pools. Pools must remain empty until an approved complying fence is installed. A building consent from your local council is required for the installation of pools and in some cases pool fencing. In some cases a resource consent may also be required. Contact your local council for compliance.

It is recommended that where possible pools and the immediate pool area are surrounded by isolation fencing to prevent thoroughfare of young children from the house to the pool. The fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987) requires all pool, spa and hot tub owners to notify their local authority.



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 should be sought from your local council. A full schedule of requirements under the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act (1987) and the New Zealand Building Code can be viewed at <http://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 – Portable spa pools 760mm above ground with a rigid, lockable cover may not require fencing. Contact your local authority or see NZS 8500:2006 for details.
- The pool has isolation fencing where possible
- 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
- Gates open away from the pool and automatically close and latch from any position.
- Any windows in walls forming part of the pool fence that are less than 1200mm from the floor do not open more than 100mm
- Doors must be fitted with a self-closer capable of latching the door shut from a distance of 150mm from the closed position. The latch must be at least 1500mm above finished floor level.
- If doors are not self-closing additional layers of protection may be required. Contact your local authority or see NZS 8500:2006 for details.

- 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:
- Horizontal supports on the neighbour's side of the fence are no less than 900mm apart
- There are no objects like compost bins, firewood stacks or similar that could assist young children climbing the fence
- There are no trees that could assist young children climbing the fence

When installing a pool fence, it is recommended that you use a reputable fencing contractor (or similar) 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.



DROWNING IS SILENT - SUPERVISE

YOUR POOL. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Are you complying with pool safety regulations? Call: **09 306 0809**, your local council or visit www.watersafe.org.nz



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

FENCING

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

Height

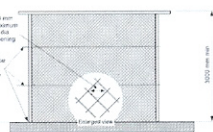
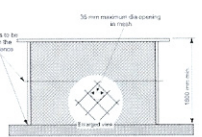
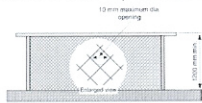
The minimum height for a pool fence is 1.2 metres above ground level. No space under the bottom of the gate or fence can be greater than 100mm from the ground at any point.

Types of materials

Fences can be constructed from any type of material provided it is durable and complies with the Standard NZS 8500:2006. Living vegetation or hedges are not acceptable as pool fences.

Perforated materials like netting or mesh can be used provided:

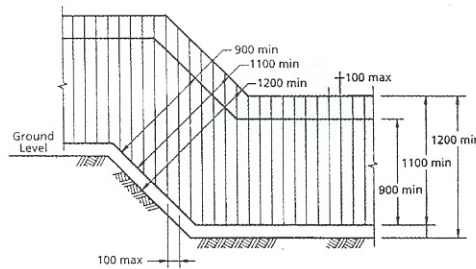
- No opening in the perforated material is greater than 10mm (diameter) for a fence 1.2 – 1.8 metres high or 35mm (diameter) for a fence 1.8-3.0 metres high. For a fence over 3.0 metres the opening may be 53mm.



Reproduced from NZS 8500:2006, with permission from Standards New Zealand. NZS 8500:2006 can be purchased from Standards NZ at www.standards.co.nz

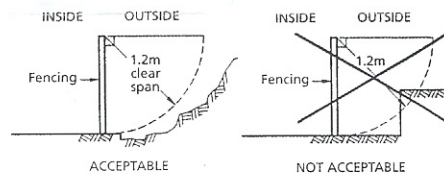
Construction

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.

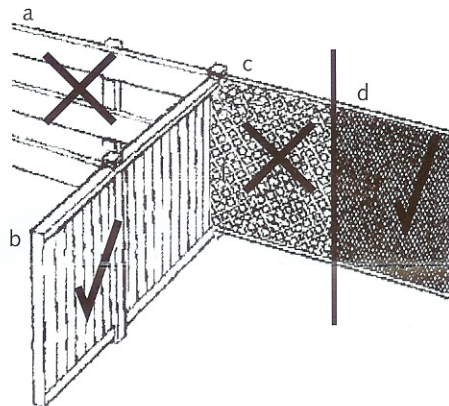


Spacing between vertical uprights must not exceed 100mm at any point.

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

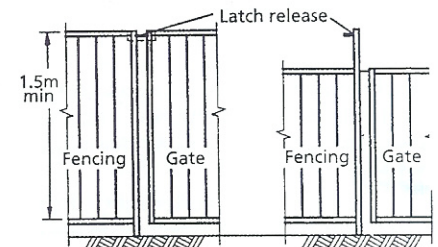
The walls of an above ground pool are considered an effective barrier if they are at least 1.2 metres high and provide no climbable holds. If the pool has a ladder, it will need to be appropriately fenced.

GATES AND LATCHES

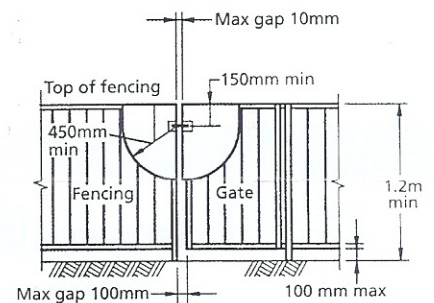
Gates must be hung so that they:

- 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 any 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.



For more information on pool building requirements go to www.watersafe.org.nz

DROWNING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD WITHIN SIGHT AND REACH

- Never prop open doors and gates
- All children under 8 years must be continually supervised within sight and reach by a responsible adult at least 16 years of age.
- Supervision should be constant, not the occasional glance whilst you read a book, socialise or relax. This includes not talking or texting on a phone.
- Many drownings occur in the few moments that parents or caregivers are distracted.
- Take your child with you whenever you leave the swimming pool. Never leave them alone.

KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

- Remove all toys from the pool and fenced pool area after use.
- Ensure there is nothing leaning against the pool fence that would help a child climb over.
- Always maintain your pool fence, gates and latches in top condition.
- If a child is missing check the pool immediately.
- Teach your child pool safety rules.
- Complete a Basic Life Support (CPR) course.
- Contact 0800 FIRST AID for details. Take a phone to the pool for emergency purposes only.



www.watersafe.org.nz
Phone WaterSafe Auckland on
09 306 0809
or your local council