

# Pool Barrier

## Inspections for Residential Pools



We are all responsible to protect our young children from accidental drowning in residential swimming pools.

Regulations are in place to ensure we all do our part.

Council is responsible for ensuring residential pools are inspected every three years to check whether they continue to comply with the Building Act.

Note, an inspection may occur at any time if Council receives a complaint regarding fencing whether or not a periodic inspection is due for that pool.

Here is a brief guide to help make sure you are ready when the council inspector visits to check your pool barrier.

## Inspections

All pool barrier inspections will be chargeable, and an invoice sent to the property owner.

To help ensure your fencing is compliant before our first visit and to avoid repeat inspections and further costs, here is some guidance on the main points that the inspector will be looking at.

*Carefully check over your fences and gates and try to identify common issues listed below as a guide:*

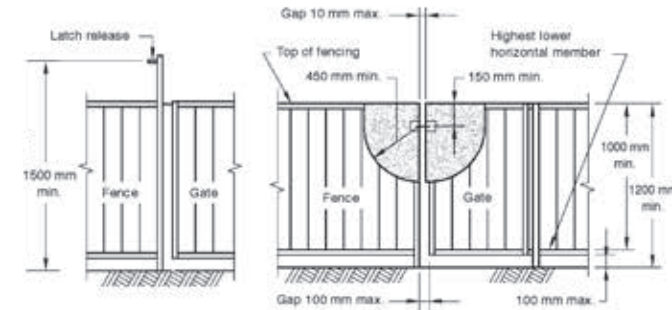
- Ensure there are no climbable objects or hand/footholds within 1.2m of the fence.
- You should be able to view the pool from anywhere within the fenced area.
- The barrier should surround the pool where possible – this is your ‘immediate pool area’. This area should only be used for activities associated with the pool.
- The pool area should not contain:
  - ~ clotheslines
  - ~ children’s play equipment
  - ~ vegetable gardens
  - ~ general storage facilities
  - ~ cat or dog doors wider than 100mm leading into pool area
  - ~ vehicle access
  - ~ sleep outs
  - ~ pedestrian access to other areas or through the pool area to your front door
  - ~ anything not pool related

## Gates

Should open away from the pool, self-close and self-latch unaided.

Latches should be 1.5m from the ground or any permanent projection, if accessible from outside of the barrier.

If the latch is on the inside of the gate, it should be at least 150mm down from the top of the gate and be inaccessible through the gate.



## If using doors as part of the barrier:

- 1) To have single leaf (<1m wide) self-closing and self-latching mechanisms fitted – with latches at 1.5m OR
- 2) An audible alarm that produces an alarm tone of 75dBAL when the door has been left open longer than 7 seconds. The alarm is required to reset itself on the door closing – with a self-latching mechanism fitted at 1.5m. AND
- 3) Signs may be installed inside 1.2-1.5m off floor as a reminder to visitors.

Please enquire with our Council if you are considering installing these options.



## Windows

If window sill height is less than 1m from the inside floor level (or climbing point) they must be fitted with 100mm limiters.



## Spa Pools

Small heated pools are exempt from the fencing requirements if they meet the following:

- 5m<sup>2</sup> or less of water surface area
- At least 760mm from the ground level to the top of every wall of the pool and from any permanent projection, such as a raised garden.
- Non-climbable pool sides.
- A durable cover that can support 20kg, is hinged from the centre with a slope down towards the sides of the spa.
- Lockable fasteners on the lid that inhibit a child's access.
- Signage indicating the lid is to be kept locked (stickers available from our Council).



## Fence heights

- Fence tops must be at least 1.2m above the ground or any permanent projection or object, eg planters or other furniture. This includes any deck balustrade being used as the pool barrier that is less than 2.4m above the immediate pool area.
- Any change in fencing levels must still meet 1.2m clearance (see photo below).
- If the boundary fencing forms part of the barrier ensure there are no trees or climbable objects, rails etc on the neighbour's side of the fence within a 1.2m radius measured from the top of the fence.
- If the pool was consented on or after 1 January 2017, ensure the inside of the 1.8m boundary pool fence has no trees or climbable objects.
- Make sure your pool barrier is durable and erected to inhibit any child climbing over or crawling under it.



*Remember a pool fence is designed to keep young children out unless they are supervised*

Watch out for any possible climb points on or near the pool barriers such as:

- Rails less than 900mm apart on the fence, including where fence panels meet
- Light fittings
- Hose taps
- Pool pumps
- Trees/vegetation
- Heat pumps
- Trellis fencing
- Window sills
- Pot plants
- Retaining walls etc



Version 1 May 2020

For further information please refer to:  
[building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/f-safety-of-users/pool-safety/](https://building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/f-safety-of-users/pool-safety/)  
[buildwaikato.co.nz/building-projects/swimming-pools/](https://buildwaikato.co.nz/building-projects/swimming-pools/)

Or contact our friendly inspector  
0800 492 452

**Waikato**  
  
District Council  
Te Kaunihera aa Takiwaa o Waikato