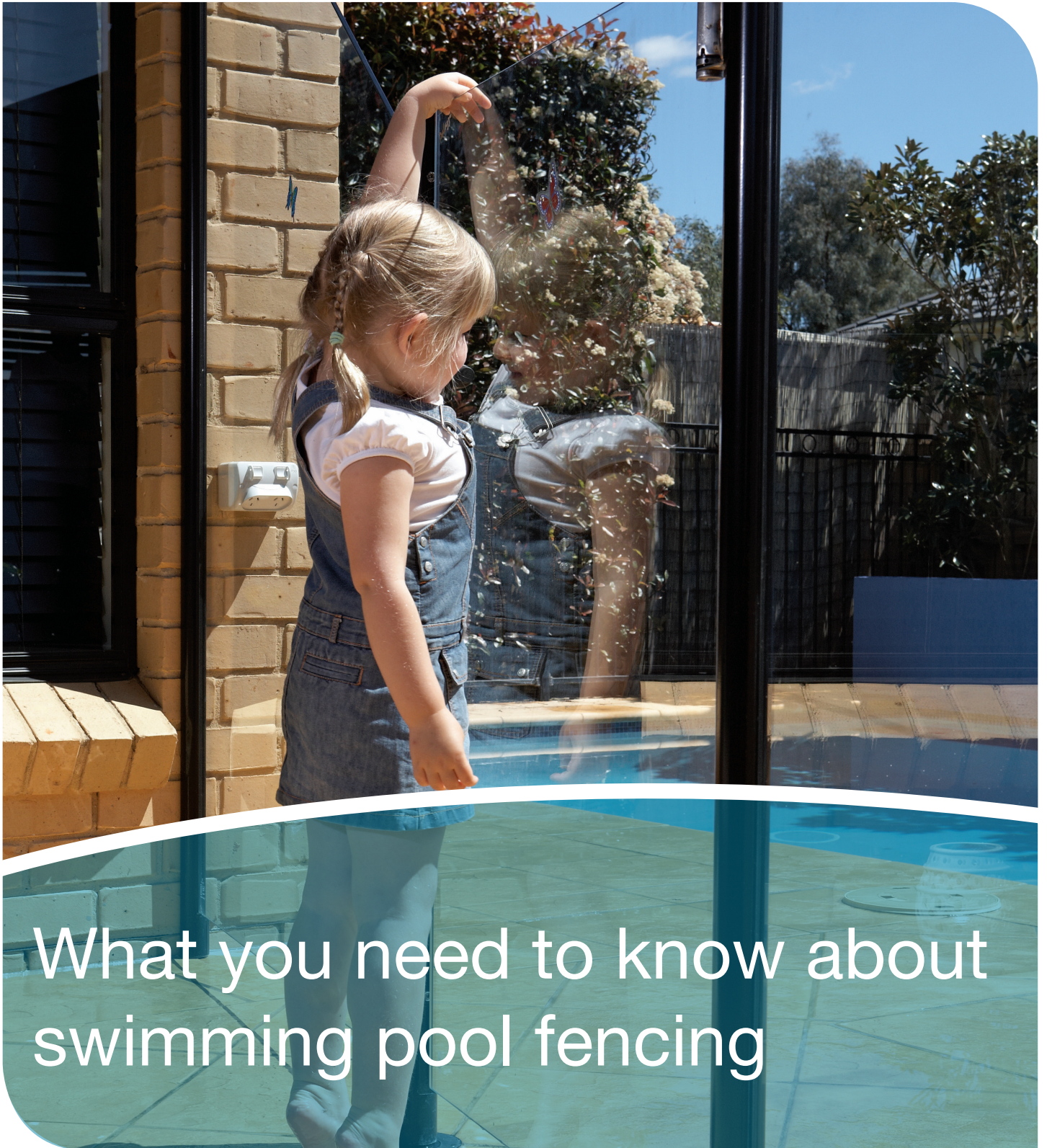


is your **swimming pool** kid safe?



What you need to know about
swimming pool fencing



Government of South Australia
Attorney-General's Department

As a swimming pool owner, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for safety.

Drowning is the biggest cause of accidental death for young children and most occur in private backyard swimming pools. You can reduce the risk of such an accident occurring in your swimming pool by making sure that your pool is adequately fenced and young children are supervised at all times.

Fencing

- > All swimming pools must have a continuous safety barrier that is maintained by the pool owner and which restricts access by young children to the pool.

Filtration

- > In-ground or above-ground swimming pools and spas must have a water recirculation and filtration system that complies with AS 1926.3 to reduce the risk of injury to a young child due to entrapment by suction.

Maintenance

- > Swimming pool owners must ensure that all required swimming pool safety features are maintained in working order at all times.
- > The self-closing gate, which is a required safety feature, can be compromised if not regularly maintained.

Supervision

- > Children can move quickly and do not recognise the dangers of a pool - close child supervision will help to reduce the number of drownings in private swimming pools.

Resuscitation

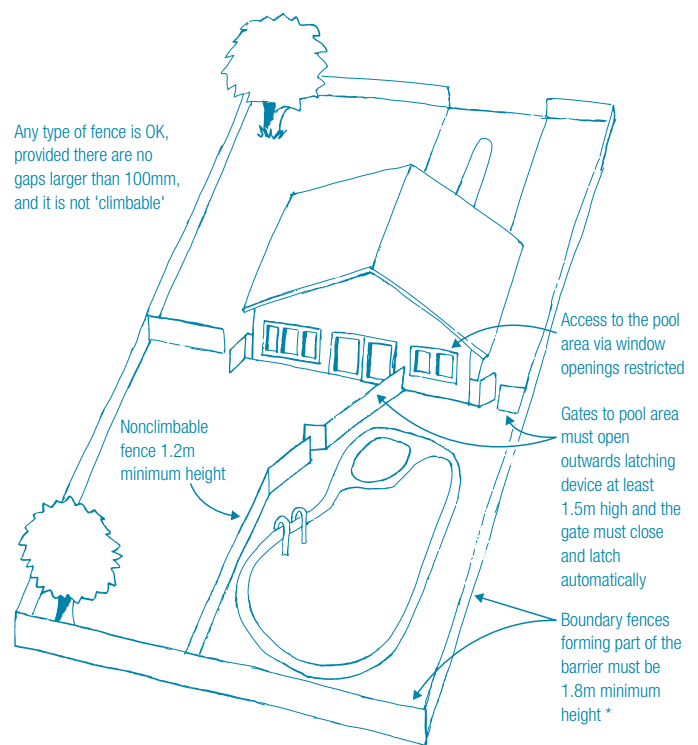
- > Resuscitation skills are crucial because they save lives – make certain that someone on the property has these skills.

LEGISLATION APPLYING TO SWIMMING POOLS IN SA

Swimming pools built before 1 July 1993

If your property contains a swimming pool built before 1 July 1993 and you are placing your property up for sale you will need to ensure that your swimming pool barriers are in line with Ministerial Building Standard MBS 004 - Swimming pool safety - designated safety features for pools built before 1 July 1993.

If the property on which a swimming pool is located is not sold, the swimming pool can continue to comply with the old *Swimming Pools (Safety) Act 1972*, which requires the swimming pool owner to ensure that the swimming pool is enclosed by a fence, wall or building or any combination of these, that restricts access by young children to the swimming pool.



* Boundary fences forming part of the barrier must be 1.8m high, with a 900mm non-climbable zone at the top on the pool side of the fence.

Swimming pools built on or after 1 July 1993

Swimming pools built from 1 July 1993 must comply with the rules that were in place when the pool or child safety barriers were approved. Contact the local Council to find out what rules apply.

Acceptable safety barriers

All pools must have suitable safety barriers to restrict access by young children to the immediate pool surrounds, constructed in accordance with Australian Standard AS 1926.1.

Barrier requirements complying with AS 1926.1

Fencing must be constructed, such that:

- > the fence is an effective barrier to young children
- > it is permanent
- > it does not provide access for young children to crawl under or to climb over by using foot and hand holds
- > it is not less than 1.2 metres high
- > boundary fences, if used as part of the child-safety barrier must be at least 1.8 metres high on the **inside**, with a 900mm non-climbable zone on the **inside** at the top. It can be less than 1.8 metres high and can be climbable on the **outside** (neighbour's side).

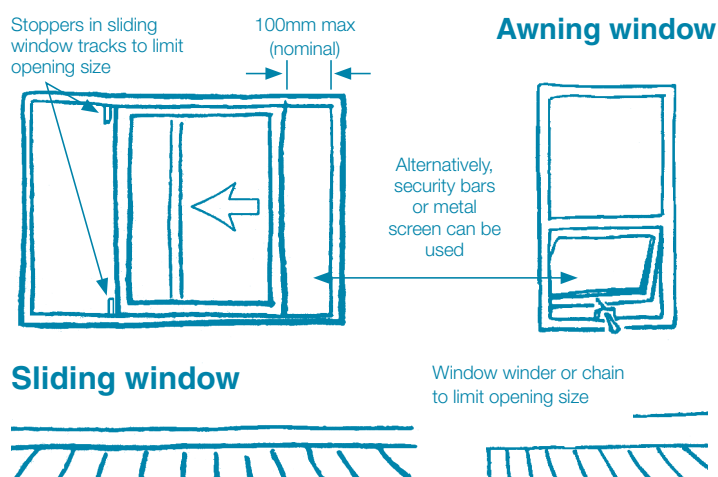
Gates to the pool area must:

- > only swing outward from the pool area
- > be self closing from any position
- > be fitted with a latching device that is out reach of small children (generally 1.5 metres above ground level)
- > you should never prop the gate open or prevent it from latching.

Security measures on awning and sliding windows complying with AS 1926.1

Where the openable part of any window is less than 1.8 metres above the finished ground level and provides direct access from the house to the pool area, it must have one of the following:

- > bars or metal screen or
- > a mechanism limiting the size of the window opening to a maximum of 100mm.



Inspections

If you are selling a property with a swimming pool, you are not required to have an inspection or compliance certificate – however some council officers, building consultants and private certifiers are able to offer advice. Only council officers have legislative authority under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) to enforce requirements for swimming pool safety.

For new swimming pools, your local council will inspect the pool and safety features including the finished child safety barriers. You need to notify your council at two stages:

1. When the pool itself is ready for filling with water
2. When the **approved** child safety barriers are finished and ready to inspect.

You must not fill the pool until a complying safety barrier is in place. A temporary barrier that complies with the Building Code can be used for not more than two months.

POOL SAFETY CHECKLIST

Ask yourself these questions to assess the safety of your pool.

> **Could a young child easily climb over, under or through your fence to get to the pool?**

Minimum standards for new pools require (generally) a 1.2m high permanent fence (or 1.8m in the case of a boundary fence), which a young child could not easily climb over or pass through from outside the pool enclosure.

> **Do all of the gates in your pool safety barrier close and latch properly, so that they could not easily be opened by a small child?**

Gates must be self-closing and self-latching. The release for the latching device must be at least 1.5m above ground level or otherwise out of reach. Gates must be hung so that they open outwards from the pool area. Never prop the gate open.

> **Is the pool clear of toys and other floating objects that could attract a child's attention?**

Balls and other floating toys can attract children to the water. Keep them out of the pool area when not in use.

> **Could a child get access to a swimming pool through a window in your house?**

The current requirement for new pools is broadly that, where the openable part of the window is less than 1.8m above the finished ground level, then a child could get access to the pool area through the window and as such the window must be protected to AS 1926.1

> **Do you keep an eye out for objects that could be used for climbing over a pool safety barrier?**

Objects such as garden furniture, children's toys, plants and ladders could be used by young children to climb over a safety barrier to get to the swimming pool. Keep these objects well away from the safety barriers.

> **Do you supervise young children while they are in or outside the pool area?**

Safety barriers alone are not enough to prevent young children from getting to a swimming pool. Young children are adventurous; they may climb, squeeze through or scale safety barriers to get to a swimming pool. Adequate supervision is essential.

> **Do you have resuscitation skills?**

Total responsibility includes resuscitation skills. Training for resuscitation is available from The Royal Life Saving Society, Australian Red Cross and St John Ambulance.

> **Do you maintain the fence and gates?**

The law requires that you must ensure that safety features are maintained in good working order at all times. This includes making sure that the gate closes and latches automatically.

Degradation of the self-closing gate can be caused by overuse or infrequent use of the pool area and its associated safety barriers.

This can lead to failure of the safety barriers to function effectively.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a swimming pool?

The PDI Act defines a swimming pool as an excavation or structure that is capable of being filled with water and is used primarily for swimming, wading, paddling, or the like, including a bathing or wading pool, or spa pool, but not a spa bath.

People often ask if the requirements apply to a fish pond or landscaping water feature. The answer is that they do not unless it is used primarily for swimming, wading, paddling or the like.

If I buy an aboveground or inflatable pool, what do I have to do?

If the pool has a filtration system, you will need to contact your local council about obtaining approval for the pool and ensuring safety features are in place.

The sides of my aboveground pool are more than 1.2 metres high. Do I need a fence as well?

The sides of some aboveground pools can be acceptable as pool safety barriers, however if you choose to rely on the side walls the ladder/access point must be fenced.

Can I install a portable pool or spa on a deck?

If you are thinking about installing a portable pool or spa on a deck, balcony, suspended floor or near a retaining wall you should seek advice from an engineer or your local council about whether the deck or wall can take the weight of the pool without collapsing.

Do I need development approval for a new pool?

Yes. Before approval, your local council will check:

- > the details and location of safety barriers (they should restrict access to the swimming pool by young children)
- > the safety of the pump (there are a number of safety requirements in place to prevent suction-related injuries or deaths in swimming pools)
- > the adequacy of structural support for the swimming pool (particularly if the pool is to be placed on a deck, balcony or near a retaining wall)

I want to sell my house and I have a swimming pool. What are my legal obligations?

If your property contains a swimming pool that was built or installed before 1 July 1993 and you are placing your property up for sale you will need to ensure that your swimming pool barriers are in line with the relevant requirements for swimming pool safety. Fencing or barriers may need to be upgraded to meet the safety requirements.

Note: This requirement only applies to swimming pools built or installed before 1 July 1993.

It is the responsibility of the party selling the property to ensure that the swimming pool safety is in line with the current requirements.

Note: A certificate of compliance is **not required** under current legislation.

Can child-resistant doors be used as part of the safety barrier?

Child-resistant doors cannot be used for new outdoor pools – only compliant fencing can be used. For pools built before 1 July 1993 child-resistant doors can only be used in situations allowed by Ministerial Building Standard MBS 004.

How long can a temporary fence/barrier be used as the safety barrier?

For up to two months from the date of completion of the pool. The approved safety barrier must be installed before the expiration of two months.

INFORMATION

www.sa.gov.au/swimmingpools

Fencing and Safety Barriers

Your local council

Building Policy Branch

Ph 1800 752 662

Resuscitation

Royal Life Saving Australia
www.royallifesavingsa.com.au
Ph (08) 8210 4500

Australian Red Cross
www.redcross.org.au
Ph (08) 8100 4500

St John Ambulance
www.stjohnsa.com.au
Ph 1300 360 455

Child Accident Prevention

Kidsafe
www.kidsafe.org.au
Ph (08) 8161 6318



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Front cover photo courtesy
of The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

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