

SWIMMING POOL BARRIER REQUIREMENTS

2003 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE

Chapter 41

Swimming Pool

E4101.1 Scope. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to the construction and installation of electric wiring and equipment associated with all swimming pools, wading pools, decorative pools, fountains, hot tubs and spas, and hydro massage bathtubs, whether permanently installed or storable, and shall apply to metallic auxiliary equipment, such as pumps, filters and similar equipment. Sections E4102 through E4106 provide general rules for permanent pools, spas and hot tubs. Section E4107 provides specific rules for storable pools. Section E4108 provides specific rules for spas and hot tubs. Section E4109 provides specific rules for hydro massage bathtubs. Any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing that contains water over 24 inches deep. This includes in-ground, aboveground and on-ground swimming pools, hot tubs and spas.

Outdoor Swimming Pool Definitions

PERMANENTLY INSTALLED SWIMMING AND WADING POOLS

Those that are constructed in the ground or partially in the ground, and all others capable of holding water with a depth greater than 42 inches (1067 mm), and all pools installed inside of a building, regardless of water depth, whether or not served by electrical circuits of any nature.

An outdoor swimming pool, including an in-ground, aboveground or on-ground pool, hot tub or spa shall be provided with a barrier which shall comply with the following:

1. The top of the barrier shall be at least 48 inches (Santa Clara City requires 72 inches) above grade measured on the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool. The maximum vertical clearance between grade and the bottom of the barrier shall be 2 inches measured on the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool. Where the top of the pool structure is above grade, such as an aboveground pool, the barrier may be at ground level, such as the pool structure, or mounted on top of the pool structure, the maximum vertical clearance between the top of the pool structure and the bottom of the barrier shall be 4 inches.
2. Openings in the barrier shall not allow passage of a 4-inch diameter sphere.
3. Solid barriers which do not have openings, such as a masonry or stone wall, shall not contain indentations or stone wall, shall not contain indentations or protrusions except for normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints.
4. Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is less than 45 inches, the horizontal members shall be located on the swimming pool side of the fence. Spacing between vertical members, spacing within the cutouts shall not exceed 1.75 inches in width.
5. Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is 45 inches or more, spacing between vertical members shall not exceed 4 inches. Where there are decorative cutouts within vertical members, spacing within the cutouts shall not exceed 1.75 inches in width.

6. Maximum mesh size for chain link fences shall be 1.25-inch square unless the fence is provided with slats fastened at the top or the bottom which reduce the openings to not more than 1.75 inches.
7. Where barrier is composed of diagonal members, such as a lattice fence, the maximum opening formed by the diagonal members shall not be more than 1.75 inches.
8. Access gates shall comply with the requirements of Appendix G See. AG105.2, Items 1 through 7, and shall be equipped to accommodate a locking device. Pedestrian access gates shall open outward away from the pool and shall be self-closing and have a self-latching device. Gates other than pedestrian access gates shall have a self-latching device. Where the release mechanism of the self-latching device is located less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism and openings shall comply with the following:
 - 8.1. The release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3 inches below the top of the gate.
 - 8.2. The gate and barrier shall have no opening greater than 0.5 inch within 18 inches of the release mechanism.
9. Where a wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier one of the following conditions shall be met:
 - 9.1. The pool shall be equipped with a powered safety cover in compliance with ASTM F1346; or
 - 9.2. All doors with direct access to the pool through that wall shall be equipped with an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door and its screen, if present, are opened. The alarm shall sound continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds immediately after the door is opened and be capable of being heard throughout the house during normal household activities. The alarm shall automatically reset under all conditions. The alarm system shall be equipped with a manual means, such as touchpad or switch, to temporarily deactivate the alarm for a single opening. Such deactivation shall last for not more than 15 seconds. The deactivation switch (es) shall be located at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door; or
 - 9.3. Other means of protection, such as self-closing doors with self-latching devices, which are approved by the governing body, shall be acceptable so long as the degree of protection afforded is not less than the protection afforded by Item 9.1 or 9.2 described above.
10. Where an aboveground pool structure is used as a barrier or where the barrier is mounted on top of the pool structure, and the means of access is a ladder or steps, then:
 - 10.1. The ladder or steps shall be capable of being secured, locked or removed to prevent access, or
 - 10.2. The ladder or steps shall be surrounded by a barrier which meets the requirements of Section AG105.2, Items 1 through 9. When the ladder or steps are secured, locked or removed, any opening created shall not allow the passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere.

AG105.4 Prohibited Locations.

Barriers shall be located so as to prohibit permanent structures, equipment or similar objects from being used to climb the barriers.

AG105.5 Barrier Exceptions.

Spas or hot tubs with a safety cover which complies with ASTM F1346, as listed in Section AG107, shall be exempt from the provisions of this appendix.

R1052 Work Exempt from a Permit: Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.