

WESTERN AUSTRALIA POOL BARRIER INFORMATION.

The Building Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) requires all private swimming and spa pools that contain water that is more than 300mm deep to have a compliant safety barrier installed that restricts access by young children to the pool and its immediate surrounds.

The requirements for safety barriers have changed over time. In Western Australia, there are two sets of safety barrier requirements depending on when the private swimming pool was installed or when plans for the installation of the pool were submitted to the permit authority for approval:

- Post 1 May 2016; and
- Pre 1 May 2016

Generally:

- For new private swimming pools (that is post 1 May 2016) the safety barrier requirements are those of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) 2016. The BCA references AS 1926.1:2012 (Safety barriers for swimming pools) and AS 1926.2:2007 (Location of safety barriers for swimming pools) incorporating amendments 1 and 2; and
- Existing private swimming pools (that is pre 1 May 2016) can continue to comply with their existing requirements under the Regulations or alternatively comply with the new requirements (that is the BCA).

The Building Commission has produced the following publications to assist swimming pool and spa owners to understand the barrier requirements for swimming and spa pools:

Compliant Barriers:

There are specific requirements for a compliant barrier (including stipulations on spacing between segments and door/latch requirements). Some of the more general requisites include:

- The barrier may be made of any materials providing they are of a durable nature and the components that make up the barrier, when finished, comply with the requirements contained within AS 1926.1-2012 and AS 1926.2-2007, in particular, strength and rigidity of openings.
- Safety barriers must be permanent in nature, which means unable to be removed without the use of tools.
- All parts of a barrier must have an effective height at least 1200mm from the top of the barrier to the ground.

- Where internal pool barriers are less than 1800mm in height, they must have compliant non-climbable zones.
- There must be no objects, steps, retaining walls or ground level changes within 500mm of the barrier that would reduce the minimum height of the barrier as required on that side.

A building permit is required under the Building Act and the Regulations prior to installing, constructing or altering swimming and spa pool barriers, including windows, doors and gates that restrict access to a swimming or spa pool area.

The local government (as the permit authority) is responsible for monitoring compliance with the requirements that apply to a swimming or spa pool barrier. The local government will receive and process building permit applications, arrange and conduct inspections at least once every four years and issue infringement notices for barriers found to be noncompliant.

Key Requirements:

<p>Where a window forms a part of the barrier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sill height less than 900 mm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o be covered by bars or mesh screens that are fixed into position Key locking devices are not acceptable and the stopping device must be permanently fixed. • Sill height between 900 mm and 1200 mm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If the sill height is between 900 mm and 1200 mm above the floor, the window must comply with either of the requirements described above or be fitted with a securely fixed fly screen frame that has a screen fixed to it and is in good condition. The screen fitted to the frame must be either powder coated aluminium or stainless steel. Nylon based fly wire is not of acceptable strength • Sill height between 1200 mm or greater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Any window that has a finished sill height of 1200 mm or greater above the floor does not require treatment. 	<p>Windows may be used providing they comply with the requirements of AS 1926.1-2012.</p> <p>If the lowest openable portion of a window is less than 1800 mm from the finished ground surface, when measured from inside the pool barrier, then the openable portion of the window must either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be covered by bars or mesh screens that are fixed into position with fasteners that require the use of a hand tool to remove (such as an Allen key, spanner, or screwdriver). Key locking devices are not acceptable; or • be fixed in such a way that the window is not capable of opening more than 100 mm. This 100 mm clearance applies to all openable windows including sliding and awning windows. Key locking devices are not acceptable and the stopping device must be a permanent fixture
	<p>Barriers to pools installed pre-May 2016 pools</p>	<p>Pools Post-May 2016 pools</p>
<p>What is a pool?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A private swimming or spa pool contains water to a depth of at least 300 mm • in-ground and above-ground pools (including inflatable and portable pools); • in-ground and above-ground spa pools (but not spa baths that are normally emptied after each use); and • bathing or wading pools. 	
<p>Barriers may consist of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of any fence • wall • or gate <p>as long as each part complies with relevant requirements of Australian Standard AS 1926.1-1993</p>	<p>Post-May 2016 pools require an isolation barrier between an outdoor pool and the residence. Doors cannot form part of the barrier to an outdoor pool (concessions exist for indoor pools).</p>
<p>Pools constructed Pre 5 November 2001 Concession</p>	<p>Allows a wall that includes a door to be used as part of the barrier providing that door complies with AS 1926.1-1993</p>	
<p>Fences/Barriers Can consist of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fences that isolate the pool within the back yard • Have an inward opening door with child resistant door sets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not permitted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A window may form part of the barrier as long as it is modified so that it meets the requirements 	
<p>Using Boundary Fences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use a boundary fence as a part of the barrier. The effective height of 1200 mm should be maintained and should be near vertical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS 1926.1-2012 requires that where boundary fences are used to form part of the barrier, the effective height of 1800 mm should be maintained on the inside of the barrier.

Where a door forms a part of the barrier	<p>Doors that form part of the pool barrier, that are permitted by the Regulations, must have the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wall of a building that is used as part of the barrier may contain a door that complies with AS 1926.1-1993, only if the swimming or spa pool was given building approval on or before 5 November 2001. • be fitted with a self-closing device that will automatically return the door to the closed position. It must allow the self-latching device to operate without the application of manual force from any position that the door is capable of opening, including when resting on the latch; • be fitted with an automated self latching device that will prevent the door from being re-opened without the application of manual force on the latch release mechanism; • the operating part of the latch release mechanism must not be less than 1500 mm above the floor; and not contain footholds protruding more than 10 mm on the door or its frame. This is to restrict the opportunity for a young child using the foothold to climb the door and release the latching device. This must be observed in between the release of the latching device to 100 mm above the floor. 	<p>Not Permitted</p> <p>Special consideration for Indoor Pools. See regulations</p>
Garage doors and perimeter gates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated garage or perimeter gates do not comply with the requirements of the Regulations. It should not be taken for granted that these can be used as part of the barrier and any consideration to their use must be authorised by the permit authority prior to swimming or spa pool installation. 	
Non-Climbable Zones (NCZ)	Not defined in regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum height of an internal pool barrier is 1200 mm. Where internal pool barriers are less than 1800 mm in height, they must have compliant non-climbable zones. • Non-climbable zones are to be free of handholds, footholds, objects or plants that will facilitate climbing.
Fences must be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1200 mm high • Lowest upper horizontal member 1100 mm 900 mm above lowest lower horizontal member • Lowest lower horizontal member 100 mm • Maximum gap between uprights 100 mm • Maximum gap between ground and bottom of barrier 100 mm • Clear span from climbable objects 1200 mm from inside and outside of barrier 	
Gate latch and closers, locks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates must open outward away from pool • All gates must be fitted with a device that will return the gate to the closed position without the use of manual force. The self-closing function must operate from any position that the gate is capable of opening, including when resting on the latch. The self-closing function should not allow the gate to inadvertently bounce back open. • Gate latch must be 1500 mm above ground and 1400 mm above highest lower horizontal 	

Gate latch Alternative to 1500 mm requirement	<p>The latch release is on the inside of the pool barrier and shielded;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the latch release is positioned so that releasing the latch device would require a young child to reach over or through the barrier: • at a height at least 1200 mm above ground level; and • at a height at least 1100 mm above the highest of the low horizontal members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the latch release is at least 150 mm below the top of the gate or away from the edge of the handhold where one has been installed · Where the gate is designed so that vertical members are spaced more than 10 mm apart and the latch release is less than 1500 mm above the finished ground level then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the latch release must be shielded to restrict the opening of a gate by a young child by reaching up and through the gate; either by hand or with the aid of an implement; and · the latch release must be shielded with material that has an effective radius at least 450 mm when measured out from the latch release. Within the shielded area no gaps of more than 10 mm are permissible
Above Ground Pools	Special requirements exist for above ground pools

Balcony	<p>If the height of a balcony is less than 2400 mm to the finished ground surface and projects into the inside of a swimming pool or spa enclosure, then either of the following modifications to a balcony access must be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if using the pre-November 2001 concession, the doors and windows that lead directly to the balcony area must meet the requirements as described in the following sections 'Doors' and 'Windows'; or • if the doors and windows do not comply then a barrier that meets the design and construction requirements as described in this section must be installed and maintained on the balcony. 	<p>If the height of a balcony is less than 1800 mm to the finished ground surface and projects into the inside of a swimming pool or spa area then a barrier that meets the design and construction requirements as described in this section must be installed and maintained on the balcony. This may be achieved by ensuring that the balcony balustrade complies with AS 1926.1-2012. If a pool barrier is located between the balcony and the pool, the balcony must not project into a NCZ. If the balcony does project into a NCZ, the balcony's balustrade must comply with AS 1926.1-2012.</p>
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