



INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS FOR POOL BARRIERS

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has amended the swimming pool barrier requirements to help prevent accidental drowning. The new requirements became effective on April 18, 1996 and apply to all new pools and spas built in the unincorporated area of the County. The County Building Code now requires a physical barrier to completely separate a pool from a house as well as from neighboring properties. This handout is intended to inform owners and contractors of the various options available when considering the appropriate barrier. All elements of the barrier must be installed, inspected and approved prior to plastering or filling the pool with water.

Definitions

BARRIER is a fence, wall, building wall or a combination thereof, which completely surrounds the swimming pool and obstructs access to the swimming pool.

SEPARATION FENCE is the portion of the barrier which separates all doors of a dwelling unit with direct access to a swimming pool from the swimming pool.

SWIMMING POOL is any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing that contains waters over 24 inches deep. This includes in-ground, aboveground, and on-ground swimming pools; and fixed-in-place wading pools. NOTE: Spas and hot tubs must comply with these requirements except for self-contained spas, which are equipped with a listed safety cover.

Barrier Requirements (Inspected during pre-plaster inspection)

- a fence or wall used as the barrier must be at least 5 feet high measured from the exterior side of the fence
- no holes or openings that would allow a 4 inch ball to pass through
- minimum 45 inches between horizontal bars, toeholds or handholds to prevent climbing, or provide maximum 1 3/4 inch space between vertical bars
- chain link fences used as the perimeter portion of the barrier must have a maximum mesh size of 2 1/4 inches square and be no smaller than 11 1/2 gage. Chain link used as the separation fence shall have a maximum mesh size of 1 3/4".
- maximum opening between grade and the bottom of the fence is 2 inches
- maximum opening between a solid surface (such as a concrete deck) and the bottom of the fence is 4 inches.

Gates

- must be self-closing and self-latching
- must swing outward from the pool area
- must meet same construction requirements of barrier fence
- latch must be 54 inches minimum above the bottom of the gate. When the latch height is less than 54 inches:
 - release mechanism shall be on the pool side of the barrier; and
 - release mechanism shall be located at least 3 inches below the top of the gate; and
 - no openings greater than 1/2" are allowed within 18 inches of the release mechanism. Gates other than pedestrian gates, such as double-gates for vehicles, must be equipped with lockable hardware and remain locked when not in use.

Alternatives to Installing a Separation Fence Between a Pool and House on the Same Lot

That portion of the barrier separating the dwelling and the pool is not required when one of the following items is installed:

- 1) Separation Fence
 - the separation fence must comply with all barrier requirements except:
 - it may be only 48 inches above grade
 - openings shall not allow passage of a 1 ¾ inch diameter sphere regardless of fencing material
- 2) Door Closers
 - all doors, including sliding glass doors, with access to the pool must be self-closing and self-latching
 - latch or lock at a minimum of 54 inches above the floor
 - for purposes of emergency exiting in situations such as a fire, at least one door in each dwelling must be openable without the use of a key or special knowledge and have a latch mounted no higher than 48 inches This door shall not open into the pool enclosure
- 3) Door Alarms
 - all doors, including screen doors, with access to the pool must have an alarm installed
 - must sound within 7 seconds after door is opened
 - must sound continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds
 - alarm must create a warning sound of at least 85 decibels
 - alarm shall automatically reset
 - must include a deactivation device to temporarily deactivate alarm for a single opening
 - deactivation shall last no longer than 15 seconds
 - the deactivation device must be mounted at least 54 inches above the door threshold
- 4) Pool Covers
 - automatic pool cover meeting ASTM Standard F1346-91

If either door closers or alarms are used to satisfy this portion of the barrier requirements then the house must be open for the inspector to verify proper installation. Have an adult present during the inspection if belongings or minors are in the home.

Lots Three Acres and Larger

- perimeter fences are not required on parcels 3 acres or greater in net area when:
- the pool is at least 100 feet from the nearest property line; and
- a barrier is installed between the dwelling and the pool
- the barrier between the house and the pool may be any one of the four alternatives listed above.

This document will certify that I am aware of the provisions of Ordinance 8656 requiring fencing for swimming pools. I have received a copy of Form DPLU #379 which stipulates what is an acceptable pool enclosure. I understand that I, as the owner, must have a pool barrier at and that the barrier must be installed prior to final inspection of the pool. I further understand that the Final Inspection must be made prior to the application of plaster in a gunited pool.

SIGNED _____ (OWNER) DATE

(Note: This form must be signed by the property owner and shall not be signed by an agent.)