

Fact Sheet on Residential Swimming Pool Fencing

Drowning is the leading cause of death among children aged 1 to 4 years in the United States and the second leading cause of unintentional injury death among children aged 5 to 14 years.¹ Over half of drowning deaths in these age groups occur in a swimming pool.¹ Four-sided pool fencing that completely isolates the pool from the house can reduce drowning risk among young children by at least 50 percent.²

What is an adequate pool fence?

- A fence should completely surround the pool, including separating it from the house, to prevent access.³
- A residential swimming pool fence is adequate if:
 - it is at least 4 feet high,
 - has vertical openings less than 4 inches wide,
 - and includes a self-closing, self-latching gate.³



Features of an effective pool barrier

Fence Type: A four-sided isolation fence that completely isolates the pool from the house is more effective than a perimeter fence that uses the house as one side of the enclosure.⁴

Fence Height: Private pool fencing should be at least 4 feet; the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests at least 5 feet for additional safety.^{2,3}

Height from the Ground: On solid surfaces (e.g., decks), the bottom of the fence or gate should not be more than 4 inches from the ground. On non-solid surfaces (e.g., grass), the bottom of the fence or gate should not be more than 2 inches from the ground.³

Barrier Openings: No opening should be more than a 4-inch diameter to prevent a child's head or chest from passing through.³

Gates: Swimming pool gates should open outward and be self-closing and self-latching.³

Additional Safety Layers: Pool safety covers and alarms can serve as extra layers of protection when used with four-sided isolation fencing.⁵

Regulations about pool fencing

- Pool fencing regulations vary by state and local jurisdiction.
- The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act requires an anti-entrapment safety drain in all public pools and spas. Residential pool owners are strongly encouraged to install anti-entrapment drain covers for added safety.³

References

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