



**Swimming Pool and Spa
Barrier Requirements
for Single Family Homes**

**Information Bulletin
No. IB-006**
Effective: December 16, 2021
By: Chief Building Official
For Public Use

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CODE REFERENCE(S):

Senate Bill 442 (Amended 2017) / California Health and Safety Code Sections 115920 through 115929 / Uniform Swimming Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Code Section 803

REQUIREMENTS:

When constructing of a new swimming pool or spa or the remodeling of an existing swimming pool or spa at a private single-family home, the respective swimming pool or spa shall be equipped with the following drowning prevention safety features.

One of the following three barriers must be provided:

- (1) A barrier (typically a property fence) meeting the following requirements:
 - A minimum height of 48 inches
 - A maximum vertical clearance from the ground to the bottom of the barrier of four inches
 - Openings in the barrier shall not allow passage of a four inch diameter sphere
 - An outside surface free of protrusions, cavities, or other physical characteristics could enable a child below the age of five years to climb over
 - Any access gates through the barrier open away from the swimming pool, and are self-closing with a self-latching device placed no lower than 54 inches above the ground or on the pool, spa or hot tub side not less than three inches below the top of the gate
 - Doors from the residence that provide direct access to the swimming pool or spa must either:
 - a. Be armed with Exit alarms. The exit alarm may cause either an alarm noise or a verbal warning, such as a repeating notification that “the door to the pool is open.”
 - b. Have a self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism placed no lower than 54 inches above the floor
 - c. OR the pool or spa shall be equipped with a powered safety cover in accordance with ASTM F1346
- (2) An enclosure that isolates the swimming pool or spa from the private single-family home. An enclosure shall have all of the following characteristics:
 - Any access gates through the enclosure open away from the swimming pool, and are self-closing with a self-latching device placed no lower than 60 inches above the ground
 - A minimum height of 60 inches
 - A maximum vertical clearance from the ground to the bottom of the enclosure of two inches
 - Gaps or voids do not allow passage of a four inch diameter sphere
 - An outside surface free of protrusions, cavities, or other physical characteristics that would could enable a child below the age of five years to climb over
- (3) Removable mesh fencing that meets American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Specifications F2286 standards in conjunction with a gate that is self-closing and self-latching and can accommodate a key lockable device

One of following three safety features must be provided:

- (1) An approved safety pool cover (if an approved safety cover is used to satisfy the barrier requirements above, an additional safety measure must be provided)
- (2) An alarm that, when placed in a swimming pool or spa, will sound upon detection of accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. The alarm shall meet and be independently certified to the ASTM Standard F2208 “Standard Safety Specification for Residential Pool Alarms,” which includes surface motion, pressure, sonar, laser, and infrared type alarms. A swimming protection alarm feature designed for individual use, including an alarm attached to a child that sounds when the child exceeds a certain distance or becomes submerged in water, is not a qualifying drowning prevention safety feature
- (3) Other means of protection, if the degree of protection afforded is equal to or greater than that afforded by any of the features set forth above and has been independently verified by an approved testing laboratory as meeting standards for those features established by the ASTM or the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)

These requirements do not apply to hot tubs or spas with locking safety covers that comply with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM F1346).

DEFINITIONS:

- “Swimming pool” or “pool” means any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing that contains water over 18 inches deep. “Swimming pool” includes in-ground and aboveground structures and includes, but is not limited to, hot tubs, spas, portable spas, and non-portable wading pools
- “Public swimming pool” means a swimming pool operated for the use of the general public with or without charge, or for the use of the members and guests of a private club. Public swimming pool does not include a swimming pool located on the grounds of a private single-family home
- “Enclosure” means a fence, wall, or other barrier that isolates a swimming pool from access to the home
- “Approved safety pool cover” means a manually or power-operated safety pool cover that meets all of the performance standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), in compliance with standard F1346-91
- “Exit alarms” means devices that make audible, continuous alarm sounds when any door or window that permits access from the residence to the pool area that is without any intervening enclosure, is opened or is left ajar. Exit alarms may be battery operated or may be connected to the electrical wiring of the building