

Tips to make your pool safer

Swimming pools should be fun. Prior to the introduction of the pool safety laws, drowning was one of the leading causes of death in Queensland for children aged under five. Supervising young children, teaching them to swim at a young age and effective pool fencing can save lives.

Laws introduced on 1 December 2010 mean that regulated pools, including pools on properties where there is a house, townhouse, unit, hotel, motel, backpacker hostel or caravan park, need to comply with the pool safety standard by 30 November 2015, or earlier if the property is sold or leased.

This fact sheet provides information for pool owners about some of the most common compliance issues for existing pools. It also provides some simple, cost-effective tips that may help you to comply with the pool safety laws and make your pool safer. All of these can be completed by the homeowner or a pool safety inspector with an unconditional licence.

Surrounding garden beds and ground levels

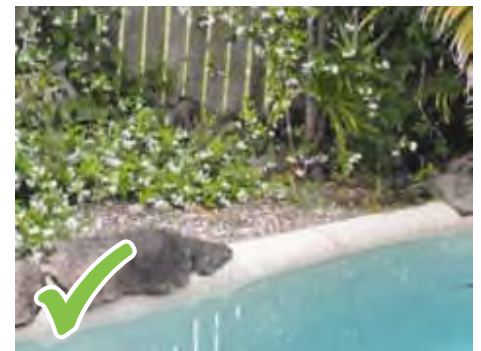
A pool barrier must be a minimum 1200 millimetres in height above the ground level. The ground level or garden beds surrounding the barrier may reduce this height if they have been raised or grown over time.



A high garden bed provides easy access to the pool area.

What can I do to comply?

- Remove surrounding garden beds.
- Reduce the height of surrounding ground levels and garden beds.
- Raise the barrier height to at least 1200 millimetres above the finished ground level.*



This garden bed does not reduce the effective fence height.

*If the work involves more than 2.4 metres of barrier or more than two posts, a non conformity notice (Form 26) from a pool safety inspector is required before work commences.

Pool gates

Non compliant pool gates can provide a child with access to a pool area. Common problems include:

- gates opening inwards towards the pool area
- gates not self-closing and self-latching from all positions
- gates with semi-functional or non-functional hinges or closing mechanisms that stop the gate from closing completely.

What can I do to comply?

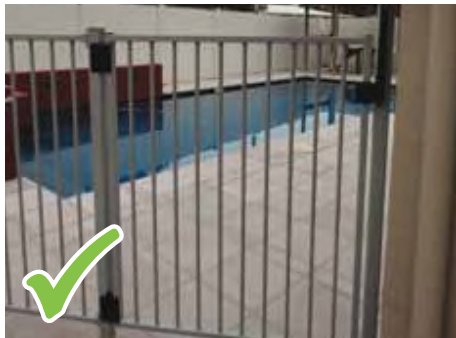
- Adjust the gate to make it swing outwards away from the pool area.
- Install a striker or latch to make the gate self-latching.
- Adjust the self-closing mechanism or replace the hinges to make the gate self-closing.
- Tighten the hinges to ensure they are capable of holding the gate.
- Oil the hinges if the gate is not closing properly.
- Ensure the gate is regularly maintained.



Inward opening gates must be modified to open outwards.



The gate or components may need to be adjusted or replaced to ensure the self-closing mechanism works properly.



This gate is self-closing and in good condition.



A gate cannot be tied or propped open when not in use and must self-close from any position.

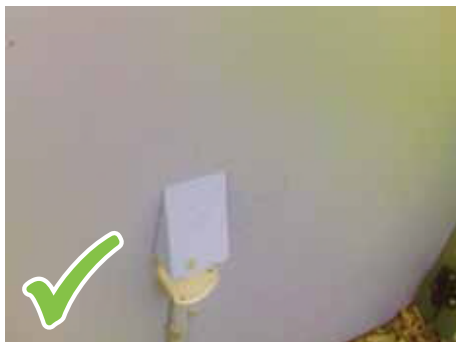
Fixed, climbable objects

Fixed, climbable objects can give a child access to a pool area. These objects include:

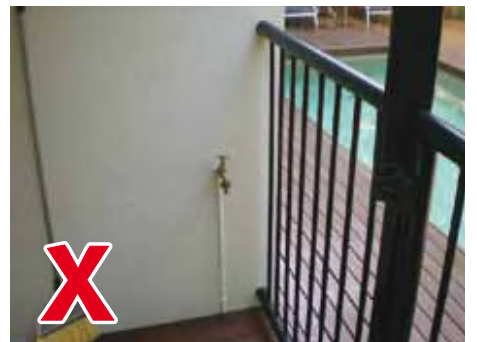
- taps or light fittings on nearby walls
- branches of nearby trees or shrubs which are below the height of the pool barrier
- other climbable objects such as bracing on a deck within the vicinity of the pool area.

What can I do to comply?

- Shield any climbable objects such as deck bracing or wall fittings with a non-climbable material such as flat polycarbonate sheeting, vertical palings or a shield that has an angle of 60 degrees or more.
- Trim any branches within 900 millimetres of the pool barrier. If there are branches on an adjacent property, you may need to negotiate with your neighbour to remove them.



A power outlet has been shielded appropriately.



A tap fitting is a climbable object and must be shielded or removed.



This deck bracing has been covered up with vertical palings less than 10 millimetres apart.

Windows that access the pool area

A building with windows that open more than 100 millimetres and open directly into a pool area can provide a child with access to the pool. Installing window locks is not acceptable as they can be easily left unlocked.

What can I do to comply?

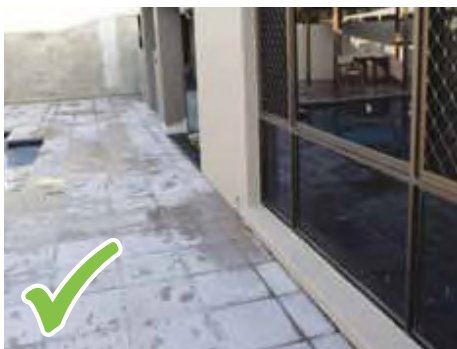
- Fix a rivet or screw in the tracks of the window to stop it opening more than 100 millimetres.
- Insert a permanent window chock to stop the window opening more than 100 millimetres.
- Install permanently fixed security screens on windows that open into the pool area.



Louvres that create a gap of more than 100 millimetres do not comply.



Windows that provide easy access to the pool area must be fixed permanently closed.



These windows have fixed security screens.

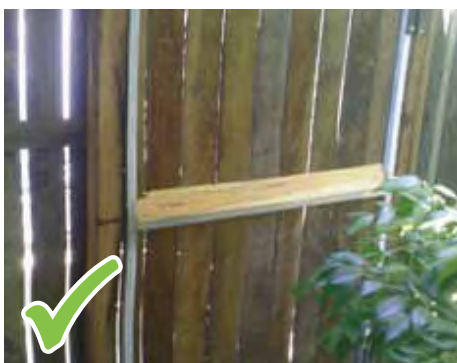
Climbable pool barrier

The pool barrier itself may be climbable and provide foot or hand holds for a child to access the pool area. Examples include:

- an intersecting fence with horizontal cross rails within reach of the top of the pool barrier
- lattice or another climbable material on the pool barrier
- climbable vegetation.

What can I do to comply?

- Fix a wedge fillet (minimum 60 degree angle) along the horizontal rails of the barrier.
- Shield any lattice or other climbable material with a non-climbable material such as flat polycarbonate sheeting or vertical palings.
- Trim any climbable vegetation on the barrier.



A minimum 60 degree angled wedge fillet along the horizontal rail eliminates a foothold.



Vegetation that can be used to climb into the pool area should be removed.



A flat polycarbonate sheet can be used to shield a climbable object.

Damaged pool barrier

A pool barrier in disrepair or one that has missing, loose or damaged palings can provide a gap of more than 100 millimetres or reduce the height of the barrier to allow easy access for children into a pool area.

What can I do to comply?

- Repair, replace or adjust the palings.
- Add non-climbable bracing to the barrier to provide greater stability.



A fence in disrepair can lower the effective height of the barrier or provide a gap for a child to enter the pool area.



Gaps in a fence over 100 millimetres can provide easy access to the pool area.

Moveable, climbable objects

A child can use moveable, climbable objects to access a pool area. Common objects include:

- pot plants
- outdoor furniture
- step ladders.

What can I do to comply?

- Remove all climbable objects within 900 millimetres of the pool barrier.
- Secure all moveable objects in the vicinity of the pool area.



A ladder is a climbable object and must be removed. The vegetation shown is acceptable as it is not climbable.



This gate is being held open by a pot plant, which could also be used to climb into the pool area and must be removed.

For more information

visit: www.hpw.qld.gov.au/PoolSafety

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Images courtesy of: Phil Montague and Emma Street.