



Home Pool Safety Checklist

This is a NSW Government water safety initiative to improve the safety of backyard swimming pools.

Dangers of backyard swimming pools

Drowning is one of the major causes of death for NSW children under the age of five. Each year on average 10 children under five drown in backyard swimming pools and many more suffer brain damage and other serious injuries associated with near-drowning experiences.

Legislation

In NSW the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* requires that **all** swimming pools have an appropriate child resistant barrier that restricts access between the residence and the swimming pool.

This legislation provides that owners may be fined if the pool fence or other appropriate child resistant barrier does not meet the legal requirements.

Swimming pool fence checklist and assessment

The attached swimming pool checklist, developed by the NSW Water Safety Taskforce in consultation with local councils, has been designed to assist pool owners determine whether their pool fence or other barrier complies with the legislation.

As there are different fencing requirements for swimming pools depending on when and where the pool was installed, three checklists have been provided. Pool owners are asked to complete the checklist that applies to their property and swimming pool. If you don't know when your pool was built, your local council may be able to help you.

For each question in the appropriate checklist answer "yes" or "no" as to whether your pool fence meets the specific requirement.

If you answer "no" to **any** of these questions your pool may be in breach of the legislation and unsafe.

In order to conduct this assessment a tape measure or ruler will be required.

Note: This checklist is to be used as a guide only. For further advice on ensuring that your pool is fully compliant with the legislation you should contact your local council. Your local council can also inspect your pool and issue a compliance certificate if your pool is compliant with the legislation. Councils may charge a fee for this.

Pool owners are reminded that there is no substitute for constant adult supervision of children in and around swimming pools to prevent drownings and other accidents.

More information is available at www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au

This checklist applies to:

- All pools installed after 1 August 1990 excluding pools on very small properties (less than 230 m²), large properties (greater than 2 hectares) and waterfront properties.

1. Is there a pool fence separating the pool from your house and the neighbourhood? Yes / No
2. Is the outside of the pool fence at least 1.2m high all the way around? Yes / No
3. Is the gap between the bottom of the fence and the ground less than 10cm? Yes / No
4. Are all vertical or near vertical palings less than 10cm apart? Yes / No
5. Are all horizontal or near horizontal fence rails more than 90cm apart so a small child cannot get a foothold to help climb over the fence? Yes / No
6. Is your pool fence well maintained and in a good state of repair as an effective and safe barrier? (eg no holes, broken palings) Yes / No
7. Is your pool fence 1.2m clear of any objects such as BBQs, trees, rocks, shrubs and deckchairs that could help a small child climb over the fence? Yes / No
8. Is your clothes line, BBQ or similar object not directly associated with the swimming pool and which could lead to the pool gate being left open located outside of the fenced pool area? Yes / No
9. If the wall of the residence forms part of the child-resistant barrier, is this wall without windows, doors or other openings that permit access to the pool? Yes / No
10. Is there an appropriate resuscitation sign displayed in the immediate vicinity of the pool area? Yes / No
11. Does the gate close and latch by itself from any open position? Yes / No
12. Does the gate open outwards, away from the pool? Yes / No
13. Is the gate release mechanism 1.5m above ground level or alternatively, located inside the gate at 1.2m and covered by an approved shield? Yes / No

This checklist applies to:

- All pools installed on very small properties (less than 230 m²); and
- All pools installed before 1 August 1990 excluding pools on large properties (greater than 2 hectares) and pools on waterfront properties.

If you have a pool fence that completely surrounds your pool, you should refer to the previous checklist that applies to **pools installed after 1 August 1990**. Alternatively the following questions should be answered:

1. Is there a child resistant barrier separating the pool from the neighbourhood? Yes / No
2. Is there an appropriate resuscitation sign displayed in the immediate vicinity of the pool area? Yes / No
3. Does each wall that is used as a barrier between a pool and adjacent properties have vertical sides, have a height of at least 1.2m and have no footholds wider than 10mm within 1.1m of the top of the wall? Yes / No

Do all doors that could allow a child to go from your house directly to the pool:

4. Have locking mechanisms (eg lock, latch, chain) which are located at least 1.5m above the floor level? Yes / No
5. When locked, have no opening greater than 10.5cm and below 1.5m above floor through which a small child could pass? Yes / No
6. Not contain any footholds on the door or door frame wider than 10mm between the release mechanism for the door and any point 10cm above finished floor level? Yes / No

Do all windows that could allow a child to go from the house directly to the pool:

7. Have the bottom of the lowest opening panel of the window at least 1.2m above the finished floor level when closed? Yes / No
8. Have no footholds wider than 10mm between the bottom of the lowest opening panel of the window and any point within 1.1m below the bottom of that panel? Yes / No

Note: the above requirements for windows do not apply if there are no gaps greater than 10.5cm in the window, grille or flyscreen when fixed by a keyed locking device.

Irrespective of minimum requirements in the legislation for pools that fall into these categories, in the interest of water safety, pool owners are encouraged to provide an approved Child Resistant Barrier to separate the pool from the residence where possible.

This checklist applies to:

- All pools on large properties (area greater than 2 hectares); and
- All pools on waterfront properties regardless of when they were installed.

A **waterfront property** is defined as having frontage to any large body of water, such as a permanently flowing creek, a river, a canal, a pond, a lake, a reservoir, an estuary, the sea or any other body of water whether natural or artificial. If you are unsure if your property is a waterfront property, contact your local council.

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| 1. Does each wall that is used as a barrier between a pool and adjacent properties have vertical sides, have a height of at least 1.2m and have no footholds wider than 10mm within 1.1m of the top of the wall? | Yes / No |
| 2. Is there an appropriate resuscitation sign displayed in the immediate vicinity of the pool area? | Yes / No |

Do all doors that could allow a child to go from your house directly to the pool:

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| 3. Have locking mechanisms (eg lock, latch, chain) which are located at least 1.5m above the finished floor level? | Yes / No |
| 4. When locked, have no opening greater than 10.5cm and below 1.5m above the floor through which a small child could pass?. | Yes / No |
| 5. Not contain any footholds on the door or door frame wider than 10mm between the release mechanism for the door and any point 10cm above finished floor level? | Yes / No |

Do all windows that could allow a child to go from your house directly to the pool:

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| 6. Have the bottom of the lowest opening panel of the window at least 1.2m above the finished floor level when closed? | Yes / No |
| 7. Have no footholds wider than 10mm between the bottom of the lowest opening panel of the window and any point within 1.1m below the bottom of that panel? | Yes / No |

Note: the above requirements for windows do not apply if there are no gaps greater than 10.5cm in the window, grille or flyscreen when fixed by a keyed locking device.

Irrespective of minimum requirements in the legislation for pools that fall into these categories, in the interest of water safety, pool owners are encouraged to provide an approved Child Resistant Barrier to separate the pool from other areas of the property where possible.
