



Safer Pool Fencing: Key Features

Safer pool fencing can prevent severe disability and death of young children as a result of unintentional drowning. Researchers estimate that safer pool fencing could prevent 7 out of 10 pool drowning incidents for children under five.

Safer pool fencing prevents young children from accessing the pool area without adult supervision. Young children often drown when they slip unnoticed into the backyard from the home – and into the pool area.

Pool fencing laws should be established and enforced in municipalities across Canada to protect young children from drowning and near-drowning in home pools. Local by-laws should be supported with education and by minimum standards established by provincial and territorial legislation.

Safer fencing should protect children from water hazards. Pools with a depth of over 0.6 m (2 ft/24 in) should be properly fenced.

Key Features of Safer Pool Fencing:

- **Consists of Four-sided fencing that completely encloses the swimming pool area.** Safer pool fencing blocks access from neighbouring children as well as children living in or visiting the home with the pool.
- **Minimum height of 1.2 m (4 ft).** Research shows that children can easily climb fences lower than 1.2 m (4 ft).
- **Covers all pools (in-ground, above-ground, portable, inflatable and hydro-massage pools, hot tubs and spas as well as decorative ponds) with a depth of over 0.6 m (2 ft/24 in).** All pools (in-ground, above-ground, portable, inflatable and hydro-massage pools, hot tubs and spas as well as decorative ponds) pose equally high risks of drowning to young children. Young children can drown in as little as 5 cm of water (2 in).
- **A self-closing and self-latching gate controls all entry into the pool area.** When properly installed a self-closing and self-latching gate will automatically close and latch every time the gate is opened, thus preventing unsupervised access by young children. Self-closing and self-latching gates are a *passive* injury prevention measure as parents and caregivers do not have to remember to close the gate—it closes by itself.
- **Fencing designed to inhibit climbing.** There are many fence designs that children can easily climb such as “ranch-style” fencing (primarily made of horizontal bars), as well as chain link fences that have large openings allowing children to get a foot-hold to climb the fence. These types of fences should not be used as pool enclosures.

For more background information on drowning prevention and safer pool fencing please contact Public Policy and Advocacy at 1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847) or email us at safekids.web@sickkids.ca. You can also visit us online at www.safekidscanada.ca
