

Keep your family safe this summer

Victorians should make sure their swimming pool or spa is installed by a registered building practitioner and has a compliant safety fence, to avoid tragedy this summer.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is reminding homeowners to check that practitioners are registered when looking to install pools and pool fencing.

The alert comes after Life Saving Victoria reported that 2020-21 was the state's [highest drowning toll](#) in 20 years.

The VBA's Executive Director of Regulatory Operations David Brockman said consumers must check that the person they are hiring is registered, with a rise in unregistered people advertising their services through online marketplaces and apps.

In Victoria, all swimming pools capable of holding more than 300 millimetres of water must have a compliant safety barrier to restrict access to the pool area by young children.

"Making sure a registered building practitioner has installed your pool or pool fence is vital, don't let just anyone be responsible for the safety of your family," Mr Brockman said.

"Just one drowning death is too many, and in Victoria in the last two decades 20 children have drowned in cases where a non-compliant safety barrier has been a factor."

In Victoria, the design, construction and installation of new swimming pools, spas and safety barriers are subject to strict requirements to maximise safety.

The requirements include being constructed by a builder registered in an appropriate category or class.

If you're looking at installing a pool, you will need a building permit before works commence. You may also need a planning permit or other permit. Check with your council about any relevant local laws or any exemptions that may apply.

The safety barriers must include self-latching and self-closing pool gates. The standards indicate an outdoor pool or spa area must not be directly accessible via a building.

"Individuals and families need to make sure they have compliant safety barriers installed this summer. With COVID restrictions easing and increasing numbers of people congregating in Victorian homes, pool owners must ensure that anybody using their pool can do so safely."

Since November 2020, Victorians must register their pool or spa with their local council.

The Victorian government [extended the deadline for lodging compliance certificates](#) for owners who had a swimming pool constructed before November 2020. For swimming pools constructed after November 2020, the first certificate of barrier compliance must be lodged within 30 days of the date of issue of the certificate.

Find out [how to obtain a compliance certificate](#) for your swimming pool or spa.

The VBA has created [checklists that owners can use](#) to see if their barriers meet the standards. Visit the VBA website for more information on [pool and spa safety](#).

For more information about water safety check the [KidSafe](#).