

Maintaining pool and spa safety barriers saves lives

Victorians enjoying a swim in a pool or a soak in a spa this Christmas season are being urged to make sure their safety barrier meets the required standards to prevent a tragedy occurring.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has today issued a warning to owners of swimming pools and spas to ensure they check that they have a compliant safety barrier ahead of summer holidays.

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.

The VBA's Executive Director, Operations, Lynda McAlary-Smith said having a compliant pool and spa barrier can help save lives.

“Since 2000, more than 20 young children have fatally drowned in cases where a non-compliant safety barrier has been a factor. These are preventable tragedies – we must do all we can to stop more heartache.”

“Everyone has a part to play in pool safety – anyone who owns a pool or spa must maintain safety barriers to prevent access,” she said.

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.

“Compliant safety barriers are extremely important, as is never leaving things like chairs or tables near safety barriers because young children can climb them and access the pool.”

“Jumping in the pool and having a swim with family and friends is a staple of the Australian summer. But it's so important to actively watch young children in and around swimming pools and spas at all times.”

As of 1 November this year, Victorians must have registered their pool or spa with their local council.

There are more than 1000 building inspectors and surveyors qualified to inspect and certify swimming pool and spa barriers across Victoria.

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](#).