Pools and spas must have fences

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) warns Victorians that all swimming pools and spas must have a compliant fence.

VBA Director of Technical and Regulation Jarrod Edwards said there is confusion on what a safe and properly compliant pool fence looks like.

“While there are stringent building regulations in place to ensure swimming pool and spa areas are safe, people often do not know what is required.

“This is why the VBA has released a new brochure for consumers called: ‘About swimming pools, spas and their safety barriers’, so home owners with pools and spas can receive easy-to-understand information,” he said.

Mr Edwards said the brochure will help Victorians make sure their pool fence complies, that they understand the regulations and where to get inspection services. The brochure will be available online at the VBA website and also from local councils.

The VBA reminds Victorians with pools and spas that they must take the following precautions:

- If a pool or spa can hold a depth of 30cms, the length of a school ruler, they must have fencing around them. This applies even to inflatable pools.

- All pools and spas built since 2010 require a four-sided fence, with no direct access from the house to the pool or spa surround.

- A building permit is required to build the pool/spa and the fencing. You must begin work within 12 months of the building permit being issued, with work to be completed within six months of starting it.

- You should hire a registered building practitioner to do the work. The VBA has a list of registered practitioners on its website at www.vba.vic.gov.au

- Gates around pools and spas must be self-closing and self-latching, regardless of when a pool was built.

- Homeowners should never prop open a pool gate. It is illegal to do this.

- Pot plants, Eskies and chairs, which may be used by children to climb into the pool or spa area, must also be moved away from the fencing.

Mr Edwards said while taking these precautions goes a long way to protecting children around backyard swimming pools and spas, the best safety message is for parents and carers to actively supervise their kids in the water.

For more information about swimming pools and for a copy of the brochure, visit www.vba.vic.gov.au

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