



City of Virginia Beach

PLANNING/PERMITS &
INSPECTIONS (757) 385-4211
FAX (757) 385-5777
TDD (757) 385-4305

VBgov.com
2875 SABRE STREET, SUITE 500
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23452

Swimming Pool Enclosure Barrier Requirements

All outdoor swimming pools, spas and hot tubs with water over 24 inches deep must be protected by a barrier as described below. Barriers are intended to provide protection against potential drowning and near drownings by restricting access to swimming pools, spas and hot tubs. A [Swimming Pool Affidavit](#) is required at the time of permit issuance.

Requirements:

- **Minimum Height:**
 - 48 inches above grade measured from the outside face of the barrier facing away from the pool.

- **Openings:**
 - Maximum of two (2) inches from grade to the bottom of the barrier.
 - Openings must not allow passage of a four (4) inch diameter sphere.
 - When the barrier is mounted on top of a pool structure, the maximum vertical clearance from the pool structure to the bottom of the barrier is four (4) inches.

- **Climb Ability:**
 - Solid barriers which do not have openings, such as a stone or masonry wall, must not have indentations or protrusions, except for normal construction tolerances for tooled masonry joints.
 - Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is less than forty-five (45) inches, the vertical members are less than one and three quarter ($1\frac{3}{4}$) inches apart, the horizontal members must be located on the swimming pool side of the fence.
 - Metal fences must be a minimum of forty-eight (48) inches in height. The spacing of vertical members must be less than one and three quarter ($1\frac{3}{4}$) inches in width when the horizontal rails are less than forty-five (45) inches apart. Metal fences that have the tops of horizontal rails more than

forty-five (45) inches apart must have the vertical members spaced less than four (4) inches apart.

Decorative cutouts must not exceed one and three quarters ($1\frac{3}{4}$) inches in width.

- Where the fence barrier is made up of diagonal members, such as lattice or chain link, the measured square openings must be less than one and three quarters ($1\frac{3}{4}$) inches. Stakes can be installed in the opening to reduce large openings to one and three quarters ($1\frac{3}{4}$) inches or less.

- **Access Gates:**

- Access gates must comply with height, opening and climb ability requirements listed above and have a locking device.
- Pedestrian gates must swing out away from the pool and be self-closing and self-latching.
- Gates other than pedestrian gates must have a self-latching device.
- Gate latches less than 54 inches above grade – the release mechanism must be located on the pool side of the gate at least three (3) inches below the top of the gate. The gate and barrier must have no opening greater than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) inch within eighteen (18) inches of the release mechanism.

- **Door & Window Alarms:**

- Required where a wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier and doors and windows are present that provide direct access to pool. Doors, screen doors and windows must be equipped with alarms labeled as complying with UL-2017. Screen doors that have their opening device installed above fifty-four (54) inches above the floor and are self-closing and self-latching, are not required to have an alarm.

Alarms and the deactivation switch must be mounted at a minimum of fifty-four (54) inches above grade.

- Must be able to be heard throughout the home.
- Must reset automatically.
- Must not be deactivated permanently.
- Alarm must be labeled as complying with UL 2017.
- Must not be removed after final inspection.

- **Safety Covers:**

- Swimming pools equipped with an electrically powered safety cover in compliance with ASTM F 1346-91, are exempt from all other barrier requirements. The safety cover must be labeled according to ASTM standards.
- Spas and hot tubs equipped with safety covers in compliance with ASTM F 1346-91 are exempt from all other barrier requirements. The safety cover must be labeled as per ASTM standards.