

Be **PoolSafe**

Lives depend upon it!



Educating In, On and Under the Water

Introduction



Swimming pools and spa pools are part of our way of life for many New Zealanders. They provide wonderful opportunities for family and friends to gather together and have fun.

Unfortunately, pools are also dangerous places where many injuries and drownings occur each and every year. This country's drowning toll is one of the highest in the developed world and drowning is the second highest cause of accidental death for pre-school children. Swimming pools and spa pools represent the single greatest danger.

However, by doing everything you can to make your pool as safe as possible and ensuring that the behaviour of those using it is appropriate, a wonderfully sparkly pool will remain a source of fun rather than becoming a watery grave.

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health and safety

In 2006 4000 people made an ACC claim due to an injury while swimming. A significant number of these injuries occurred in and around swimming pools. The most common causes of injury included slips, trips and falls, often resulting in fractures, dental injuries, sprains and strains.

Pools can be fun places but need to be treated with respect.

Poolsides can be slippery and water depth can be difficult to gauge. If you are unfamiliar with the pool you are swimming in, always walk around the poolside and check the depth before entering the water.

Each and every pool should have some safety signage. Pool rules and what to do in the event of an emergency should be clearly displayed.

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**All children under 8 must be
ACTIVELY SUPERVISED
by a CAREGIVER 16 or over.**

- Check depth of pool before entering.
- Non-swimmers – do not go in over your depth.

NO RUNNING **NO PUSHING OR DUNING** **NO SCUM CREES** **NO FOOD IN POOL AREA** **NO SLASH IN POOL AREA**

IN AN EMERGENCY PHONE 111

pool fences save lives



Don't sit on the fence while children drown.

There can be few thoughts more stomach churning for a parent, grandparent or caregiver, than having to contend with a tiny child floating lifeless in the water. **Children drown quietly and quickly.** There's little noise and no drama as a naturally curious child slips into a pool. The only thing you'll hear forever after is the silence!

Prior to the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 coming into force, the average number of drownings of pre-school children for the period 1980-1986 was 10. Since the introduction of the Act the number of pre-school children who have drowned in home pools has declined by 60%. The average number of pre-school child drownings in home pools over the past five years has been reduced to three per annum.

There are over 73,000 home pools around the country and approximately 30% of these do not comply with current fencing legislation. They each represent an injury or death, waiting to happen.



Children have the right to be protected.

It is your responsibility as an adult to ensure that the children you are caring for are safe. Unfortunately, the majority of children who drown are alone and unsupervised, or in the care of other children at the time. Supervision without any distractions is the single most important factor in protecting children in and around water.



Always supervise children near water – ALWAYS!

However, even the most vigilant parent or caregiver cannot supervise their children every minute of the day. **And that is all it takes to lose them forever, just a minute!** The time it takes to:

- make or answer a very short phone call!
- have a quick scan through the TV programmes in the newspaper!
- make a cup of tea!

The only safe pool environment is one where young children cannot gain access to a pool without adult supervision. **Children simply do not understand the dangers.** That's why all swimming and spa pools need to be fenced.

Swimming pools in rural areas are as much of a hazard to children as pools in urban areas. Which is why all pools, regardless of their location, must be fenced in accordance with the Act. Far too many aren't, and as a result far too many children die or suffer injury.

The Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 requires that all pools are to be fenced to a standard that will prevent young children from gaining access to the pool. *See inside back cover for a check list that will guide you as to whether your pool is safe*

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what needs to be fenced?



For the purposes of the Act a swimming pool is defined as **any excavation, structure or product containing water over 400mm deep that is used or is capable of being used for swimming, wading, paddling or bathing and includes spa and inflatable pools.**

All pools must be fenced. Pools must remain empty until an approved complying fence is installed. A building consent from your local council is required for the installation of pools and in some cases pool fencing. Contact your local council for more details.

It is recommended that where possible pools and the immediate pool area are surrounded by isolation fencing to prevent thoroughfare of young children from the house to the pool.

The fencing must comply with the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 and the Building Code.



“... over 85% of children who drown in pools either lived in the home or were invited”

It's not a tragedy, it's a crime.

Contrary to popular belief, over 85 percent of children who drown in pools either lived in the home or were invited there as guests. If you own the pool the responsibility for prevention rests with you. If you sit on the fence over this issue, you commit a crime. A crime that could mean a child – your own or someone else's – dies in your home or on your property.

What are your priorities?

How can anyone put beauty before brains? Thoughtful design and planning can enable a fenced pool to be incorporated into a safe and stunning environment. It is not worth trying to landscape your way around your fencing responsibilities.

Nothing can be placed above the value of a child's life.

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do something about drowning!

It's true that since the Act was passed in 1987, children have drowned in both fenced and unfenced homes pools. But if all these pools had been fenced in a manner that met the requirements of the Act at the time of the incident, many more of these children would have lived.

If your pool is not fenced at this point, you are not just breaking the law; you also risk breaking your heart. Make the changes now – before it really is too late. If you need specific details on the requirements of the Act, ask for them from your local council.

If you are unsure of the technical details, contact your local building inspector for assistance.

The importance of gates

Most “unauthorised” access by toddlers to pool areas occurs as a result of a gate being inadequately latched or propped open.

- Gate hinges should be self-closing and tension adjustable for added safety.
- Gate latches should have no resistance to closure.
- Use magnetic latches for superior results.



Cut the risk before you have to count the cost.

Fencing that complies with the Act is a critically important part of having a safe home environment for children. You can cut the risks even further by:

- maintaining the fence and gate in good condition;
- **always supervising children in or near a pool;**
- always making sure the gate to the pool is safely shut;
- setting rules of behaviour around the pool;
- covering the area around the pool with a non-slip surface;
- clearing away toys and flotation aids from the pool area when they are not being used;
- making sure both children and adults understand that they must NEVER prop open the pool gate;
- making sure there are no objects near the pool fence which a child could use to climb or stand on to get over the fence; and
- learning first aid and resuscitation.



Hazardous Chemicals

Chemicals like chlorine are dangerous and need to be stored in a safe place and used in correct dosages. If you are unsure about how pool chemicals should be used and/or stored approach your pool chemical supplier for advice. At the very least keep pool chemicals out of sight and reach of young children.

Watch out for other water hazards

You should also be aware of other potential water hazards. Buckets and other water containers, toilet bowls, fishponds, water troughs – anything containing water which can be reached or climbed up to can be dangerous to a small child around the home



Public Pools

Public swimming pools have become the centre for many aquatic recreational and fitness activities. Learn to swim, underwater hockey, aquafit, fifties forward, minidippers are just a few programmes that may be on offer. If you are interested in learning to swim, improving you technique, establishing a fitness programme, or just meeting new people you should consider a visit to your local pool.

Public pools are not cheap baby sitting venues. Always supervise your young children near water – ALWAYS. Wherever possible be in the water with your child in swimming pools or any aquatic environment

School Swimming Pools

School swimming pools are valued educational assets, which need to be managed appropriately and used responsibly. There are a number of pieces of legislation and standards which schools are required to comply with for the operation and management of a school swimming pool.

Water Safety New Zealand have developed a number of resources to provide guidance to Boards of Trustees for best practice in the operation and management of school swimming pools including Board of Trustees obligations, a recommended school pool policy as well as important information on legislation standards and potential management concerns. All information is on-line and available free of charge from www.poolsafe.org.nz

Hotel Pools

The Swimming Pool Reference Tool has been specifically developed for the hospitality industry. It provides informative and valuable information on risk management, water quality, supervision and signage. View on-line or order a free copy at www.poolsafe.org.nz



ask yourself... is your pool safe?

CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
Is the fence at least 1.2m high?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there no gaps greater than 100mm in the fencing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do gates open outwards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do gates automatically shut?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are gate latches self-locking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have top bolts on ranch sliders that may prevent access to the pool?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steps for para-type pools are removed when the pool is not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the pool surround have a non-slip surface?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a first aid kit available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pool chemicals stored safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have signage for emergencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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For further information

If you would like to find out more about water safety, particularly for children, please contact

Water Safety New Zealand
PO Box 10 126
Wellington

Tel 04 801 9600

Fax 04 801 9599

email wsnz@watersafety.org.nz

www.watersafety.org.nz

www.poolsafe.org.nz

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