



## Queensland swimming pool safety review



Child drownings have halved since Queensland introduced some of Australia's toughest swimming pool safety laws in 1991, but we can do better.

Over the past three years, 18 young Queenslanders have drowned in private pools.

That's why the Queensland Government has announced the biggest review of Queensland's pool safety laws in nearly 20 years.

As part of this review, an independent committee of industry, child safety and government representatives has been established to develop a report setting out a range of improvement ideas. Before considering the report, the government wants to hear what you think about the committee's ideas.

**Have your say—consultation closes 5pm 5 June 2009.**

### What are the main changes for pool owners?

With 11 different pool safety standards, the current pool safety laws are confusing and it is difficult to understand which standard applies to your pool. The report proposes that these 11 standards will be simplified down to just 1—the new national standard for pool fencing AS1926–2007. The only variation will be for pools built before 1991, where child-resistant doors can still form part of the safety barrier.

The new standard sets out technical details, such as minimum fence heights, maximum fence gaps and self-closing requirements for gates. More information about the new standard is given in the committee's report.

### I have an existing pool—how will these changes affect me?

Many pools will require little or no upgrade. Some pools may need work to meet the new standard, however a five-year grace period will apply unless the property is sold or rented out first.

Some of the changes are outlined below:

- **For all pools**, any climbable objects within a 900 mm zone from the fence will need to be removed (see Figure 1). This zone is changing from the current

1.2 m and is now being extended to include an arc above the pool fence.

- **For pre-2003 pools**, a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) sign will be needed. Pools with an exemption from the pool safety laws will need to be upgraded to fully meet the laws, unless the exemption relates to people with disabilities.
- **For pre-1991 pools**, fence heights may need to be raised to 1.2 m and gaps in the fence reduced down to 100 mm. Gates may also need to be changed to swing outwards. However, child resistant doors will still be allowed as an alternative to a fence between the building and pool for these older pools.

### I am putting in a new pool—how will these changes affect me?

A compliance certificate is already required by law before a new pool can be filled with water, however some owners do not do this. Automatic follow-up inspections will now be mandatory within six months of building approval for a pool, or within two years if the pool is part of other work such as a new house.

Temporary fencing will be needed during construction until a permanent fence is installed, in keeping with existing industry practice.

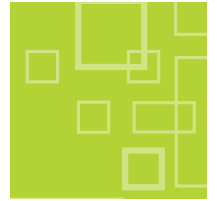
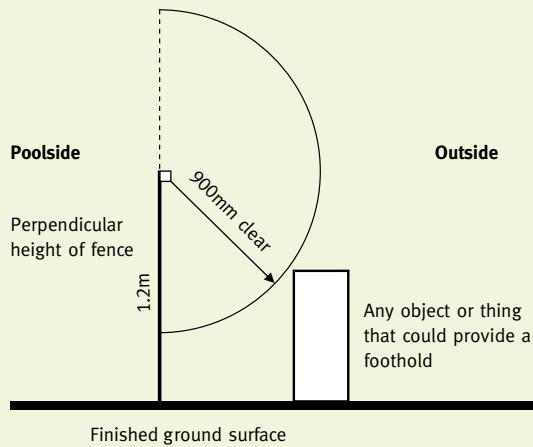


Figure 1



NOTE: For boundary fences, the non-climbable zone can be on the inside of the fence, provided the fence is 1.8 meters high. The non-climbable zone is only required on one side of the pool fence.



## Will I be required to get a pool safety inspection?

There is a significantly higher risk of a child drowning within the first six months of moving into a home with a pool—that's why inspections will now be required when a property is sold or leased. However, further inspections will not be needed if the property is resold or re-leased within two years, or within one year for shared pools.

Vendors and lessors will be responsible for organising and paying for the inspections, but bodies corporate will do this in complexes with shared pools, such as apartment buildings, and then give a copy of the certificate to vendors and lessors within the complex.

Private and local government licensed inspectors will be able to undertake the inspections, at an expected cost of around \$90 to \$130 per inspection.

## What else is changing?

A range of other changes are set out in the committee's report, such as:

- requiring portable pools 300 mm or deeper to meet the pool safety laws in line with other states, instead of the current 450 mm
- extending the pool safety laws to apply to indoor pools and pools associated with class 3 buildings (e.g. hotels, motels) and class 4 buildings (e.g. caretaker dwellings)
- requiring fences for pre-1991 pools to be upgraded if any changes are made to the pool barrier so that a fence is provided instead of using child resistant doors. This won't apply to upgrades required by this review
- limiting the ability for local governments to have local pool safety laws
- improving the enforcement provisions for private building certifiers
- requiring local governments to develop a register of pools in their area
- requiring a mandatory inspection to be undertaken when a drowning or near drowning occurs or when a complaint is made, in line with current best practice
- strengthening powers of entry to inspect outdoor pools only (this power will be limited to pool safety issues).

## How to have your say

To view the committee's report and submit an online response form, visit [www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au)

### Post your comments to:

Review of Queensland's swimming pool safety laws  
Department of **Infrastructure and Planning**  
Building Codes Queensland  
PO Box 15009 CITY EAST  
QLD 4002 Australia  
**tel** 1800 682 021 free-call  
**fax** +61 7 3237 1248  
[poolsafetyreview@dip.qld.gov.au](mailto:poolsafetyreview@dip.qld.gov.au)