

# VBA POOL AND SPA SAFETY BARRIER SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST 2

**FOR POOLS AND SPAS INSTALLED BETWEEN 8 APRIL 1991 AND 30 APRIL 2010**  
**RELEVANT STANDARDS: AS 1926.1 – 1986 (FOR BARRIERS APPROVED FROM 8 APRIL 1991 TO 31 OCTOBER 1994)**  
**OR AS 1926.1 – 1993 (FOR BARRIERS APPROVED FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1994 TO 30 APRIL 2010)**

Swimming pools and spas on residential properties in Victoria that are capable of holding more than 300 mm (30 cm) of water are required to have a pool safety barrier to restrict access to a pool area by young children (under the age of 5). This also includes relocatable pools, above ground pools, indoor pools, hot tubs, and bathing or wading pools. In addition, all gates, fences or walls that form part of the barrier around the pool must be kept in good working condition.

## THE SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST



This self-assessment checklist is intended to help pool and spa owners maintain the safety of pool barriers approved between 8 April 1991 and 30 April 2010. The checklist applies to swimming pools and spas associated with residential homes, apartments, boarding houses, motels, hotels or similar dwellings.

**The checklist is not exhaustive and the use of the checklist will not amount to legal compliance.**

The checklist is designed to provide guidance to assist homeowners with maintaining safety around pool and spa areas, including guidance to determine if pool or spa barriers are in good working condition and adequately restrict access by young children to the pool or spa area.

## HOW TO COMPLETE ASSESSMENT



Answer each question (where applicable). If you answer **'NO'** to any question it is recommended that you make any repairs as soon as possible, or if you are unsure about the compliance of your barrier speak to a building surveyor.

If you answer **'YES'** to any question and would like further reassurance about compliance of your barrier also speak to a building surveyor.

## DEFINITIONS



### **BARRIER**

Components such as fences, posts, panels, walls, gates, doors and windows on buildings and other fittings restricting access to a pool or spa area.

# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

## STEP 1 – BARRIER

**OBJECTIVE:** SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS MUST BE SURROUNDED BY A BARRIER RESTRICTING UNSUPERVISED ACCESS BY YOUNG CHILDREN.

a) If your pool or spa barrier was approved between 8 April 1991 and 31 October 1994, complete **Steps 2, 3 and 8.**

b) If your pool or spa barrier was approved between 1 November 1994 and 30 April 2010, complete **Steps 2 to 8.**

## STEP 2 – FENCING (INCLUDING ASSOCIATED GATES)

**OBJECTIVE:** FENCING MUST BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED TO ENSURE THAT:

- it cannot be used as a climbing device for young children to access the pool area; and
- no surfaces close to the fence can be used as a climbing platform; and
- young children cannot climb under the fence to access the pool area.

Is the pool fencing at least 1200 mm high?

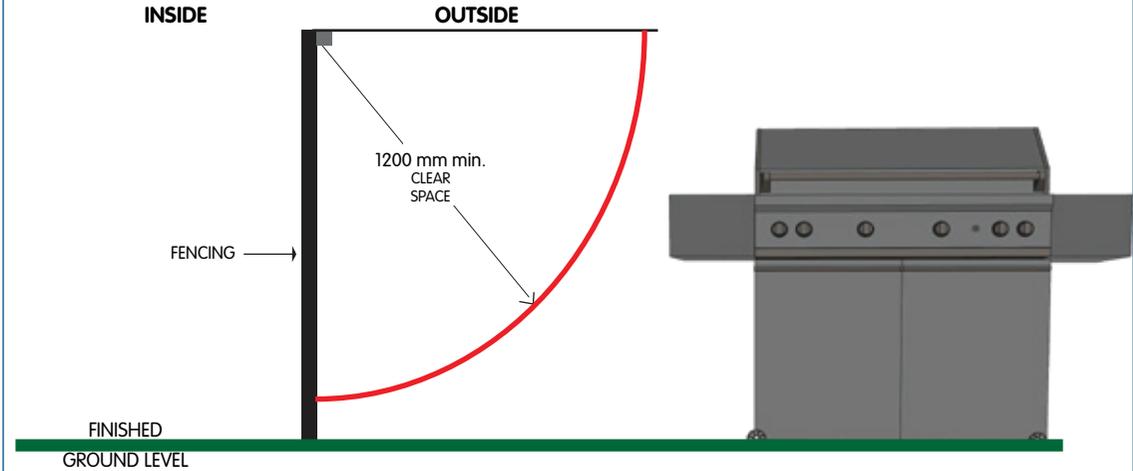
# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

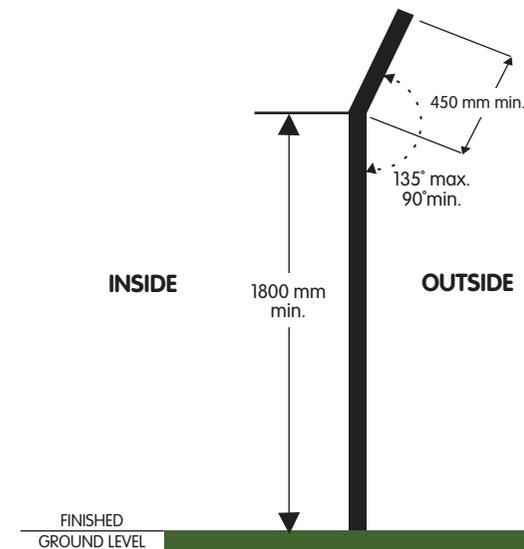
Is the area around the outside of the fencing clear of climbable objects (e.g. furniture, toys, pot plants, BBQs) within a 1200 mm quarter circle measured from the top of the fence?  
(Refer to diagram)



If the fencing is constructed using perforated material or mesh with holes greater than 13 mm but less than 100 mm:

- is it at least 2400 mm high; or
- does it have a vertical section at least 1800 mm high with a 450 mm cranked top above (Refer to diagram); and

does the fence have strainer wires or rails at the top and bottom?



# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

Are horizontal elements, such as rails, rods, wires or bracing:

- on the outside of the fencing, or where the spacing of the vertical elements is between 10 mm and 100 mm, at least 900 mm apart (Refer to diagram); or
- on the outside of the fencing with:
  - the spacing of the vertical elements not more than 10 mm apart; and
  - the upper surface of the projection or indentation sloping away from the pool by at least 60 degrees to the horizontal?



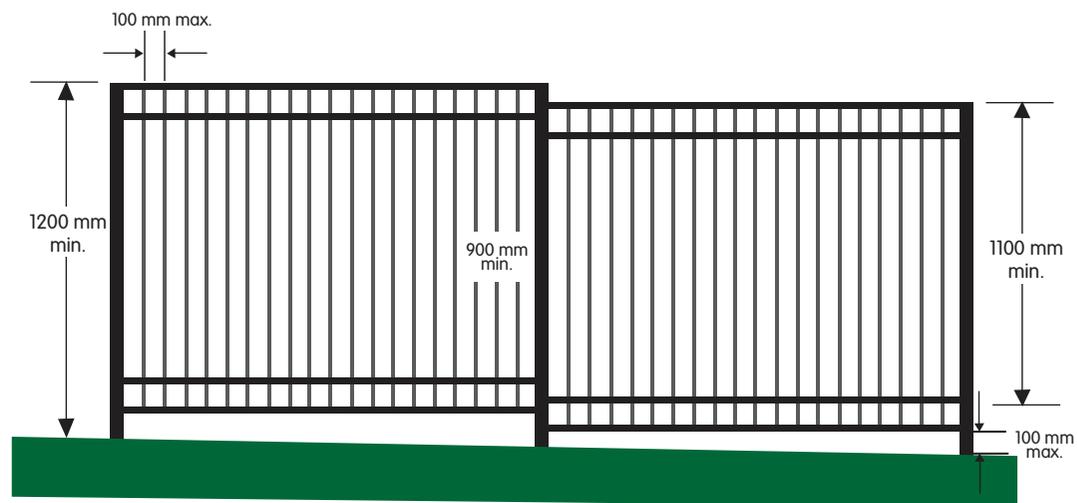
Are adjacent vertical elements, such as rods, palings, wires or bracing, no further apart than 100 mm? (Refer to diagram)

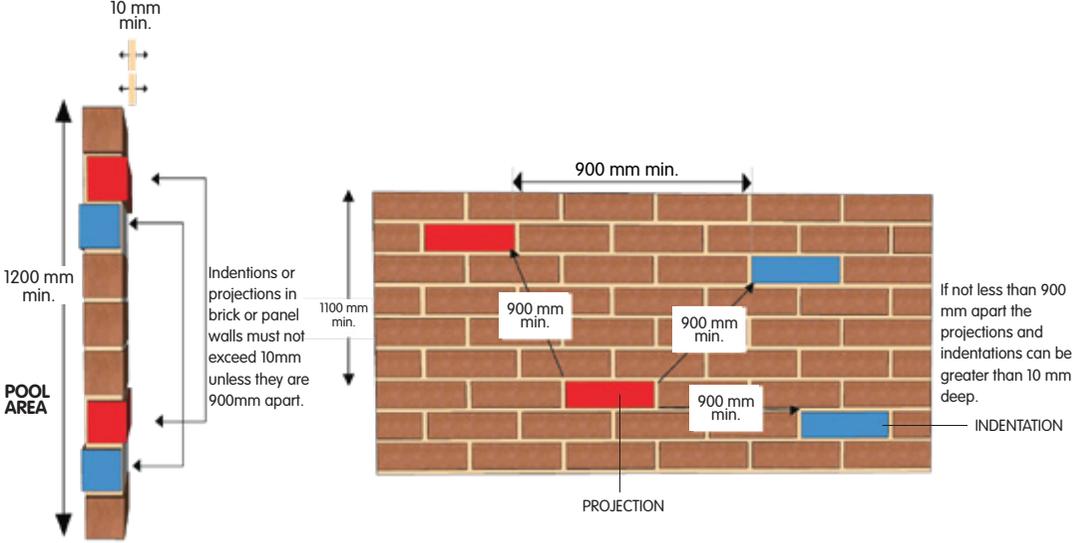


Are openings between the bottom of the fencing and the finished ground level 100mm less? (Refer to diagram)



If the spacing of vertical elements is greater than 10 mm, are horizontal surfaces (such as BBQs or fixed seating) inside the fencing located at least 300 mm away from the fencing?

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DIAGRAM
<p>Are projections and indentations (potential footholds and handholds) with a depth of 10 mm or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spaced at least 900 mm apart, and at least 1100 mm below the top of the barrier (Refer to diagram); or</li> <li>sloping away from the pool by at least 60 degrees to the horizontal?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### STEP 3 – GATES AND FITTINGS

**OBJECTIVE:** ALL GATES MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, DOORS AND GATES MUST RETURN TO THE CLOSED POSITION WHEN RELEASED.

<p>Do gates providing access to the pool area swing outwards, away from the pool area?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Are gates fitted with a self-closing device that will return them to the closed position and engage the latching device from any position with a stationary start without using manual force?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Are gates fitted with a self-latching device that will automatically operate on closing of the gate and prevent the gate from being reopened without being manually released?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Are the gate self-latching devices incapable of being adjusted in operation or adjusted without the use of tools?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# QUESTIONS

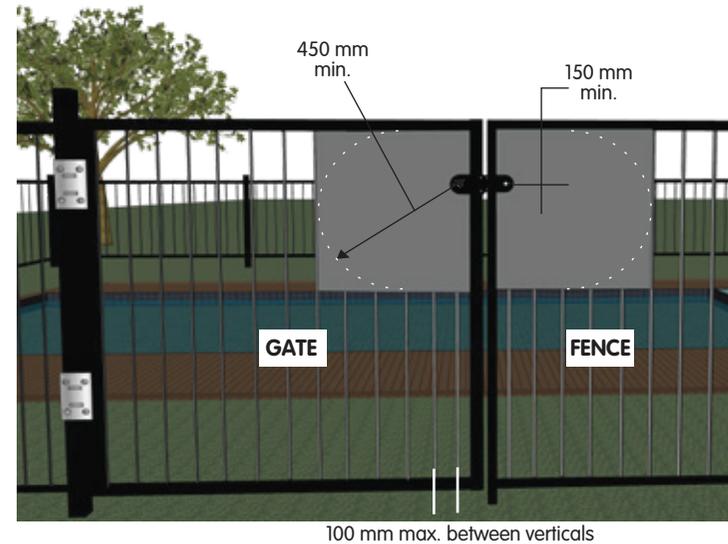
YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

Are gate latch and release devices:

- located at least 1500 mm above the finished ground level; or
- located at least 1400 mm above the highest lower horizontal rail, rod, wire or bracing; or
- shielded to prevent inadvertent opening from outside the barrier? (Refer to diagram)



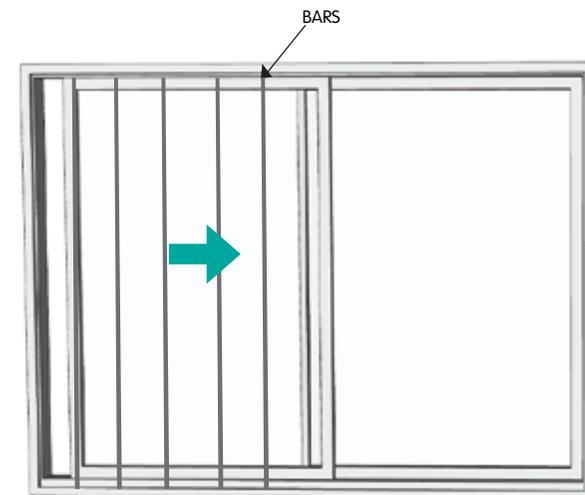
## STEP 4 – WINDOWS (APPLICABLE ONLY TO POOLS OR SPAS APPROVED FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1994 TO 30 APRIL 2010)

**OBJECTIVE:** WINDOWS THAT FORM PART OF A BARRIER MUST NOT PROVIDE A PATHWAY INTO THE POOL AREA.

Are all openable parts of a window:

- at least 2400 mm above the pool area; or
- 1200 mm above the internal floor; or
- between 900 mm and 1200 mm above the internal floor, and the opening panel is fitted with a securely fixed flyscreen; or
- not greater than 1200 mm above the floor, and the openable portion of the window—
  - is covered by bars or a mesh screen that can only be removed using a tool (Refer to diagram); or
  - is fixed; and

openings are sufficiently strong and rigid to prevent a 105 mm diameter object from being able to pass through?



# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

## STEP 5 – DOORSETS (APPLICABLE ONLY TO POOLS OR SPAS APPROVED FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1994 TO 30 APRIL 2010)

**OBJECTIVE:** ALL DOORS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, DOORS AND GATES MUST RETURN TO THE CLOSED POSITION WHEN RELEASED. YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH AND OPEN THE DOOR BY CLIMBING USING NEARBY FOOTHOLDS.

Are doors fitted with a self-closing device that returns the door to the closed position without using manual force?

Are doors fitted with a self-latching device that will automatically latch on closing of the door and prevent the door from being reopened without manual release, with the release located inside the building at least 1500 mm above the floor?

Are all footholds on doors near the area of release less than 10 mm deep or less than 100 mm above the floor?

# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

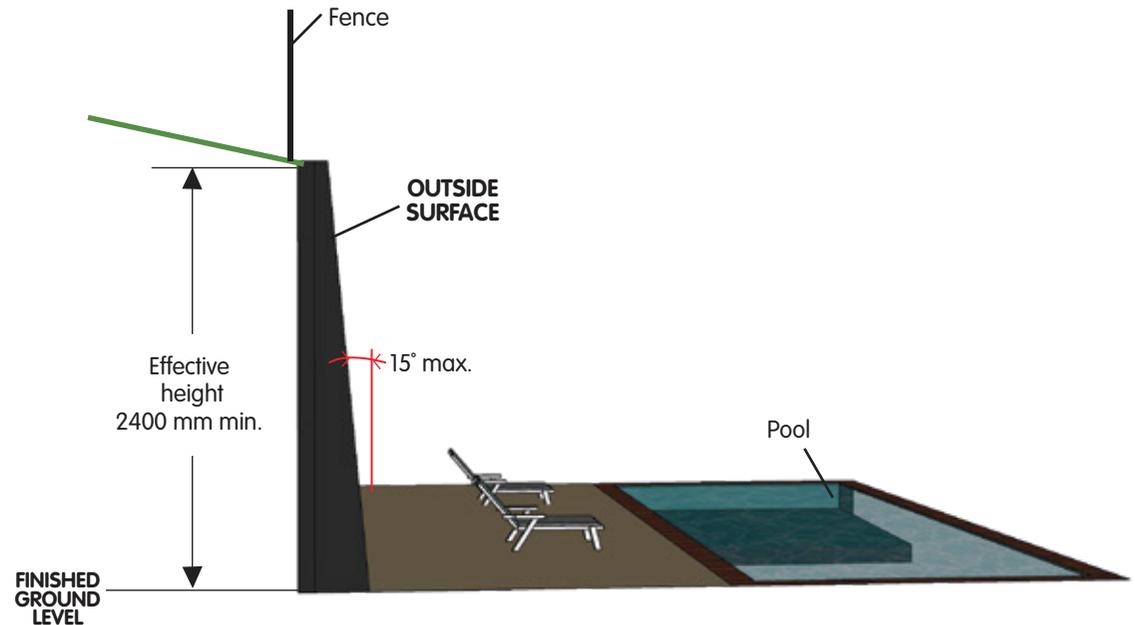
# DIAGRAM

## STEP 6 – RETAINING WALLS (APPLICABLE ONLY TO POOLS OR SPAS APPROVED FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1994 TO 30 APRIL 2010)

**OBJECTIVE:** RETAINING WALLS MUST BE CONSTRUCTED SO THEY RESTRICT ACCESS BY YOUNG CHILDREN TO THE POOL AREA.

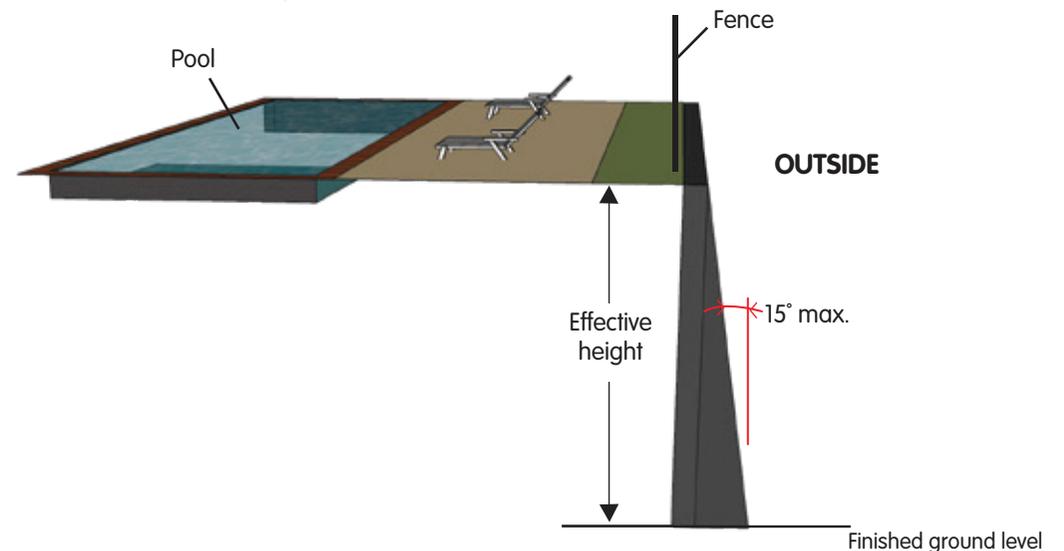
If a retaining wall or similar structure forms part of the pool barrier on the high side of the pool, does:

- it have an effective height of at least 2400 mm; and
- the outside surface have all projections and indentations with a depth of 10 mm or more:
  - spaced at least 900 mm apart and at least 1100 mm below the top of the barrier; or
  - the upper surface of the projection or indentation sloping towards the pool by at least 60 degrees to the horizontal; and
- slope away from the pool by not more than 15 degrees to the vertical? (Refer to diagram)

If a retaining wall or similar structure forms part of the pool barrier on the low side of the pool, does it slope towards the pool by not more than 15 degrees to the vertical, and:

- have an effective height of at least 1200 mm, and an outside surface with all projections and indentations having a depth of 10 mm or more:
  - spaced at least 900 mm apart and at least 1100 mm below the top of the barrier; or
  - the upper surface of the projection or indentation sloping away from the pool by at least 60 degrees to the horizontal; or
- have an effective height of at least 2400 mm? (Refer to diagram)

# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

## STEP 7 – ABOVE GROUND POOLS (APPLICABLE ONLY TO POOLS APPROVED FROM 1 NOVEMBER 1994 TO 30 APRIL 2010)

**OBJECTIVE:** OBJECTS SUCH AS LADDERS, PUMPS AND FITTINGS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE USED AS A CLIMBING SURFACE TO ACCESS THE ABOVE GROUND POOL.

Where the walls of the pool are used as a barrier, are they at least 1200 mm high above ground level and do they restrict climbing within a 1200 mm clear zone?

## STEP 8 – STRENGTH AND RIGIDITY OF FENCING COMPONENTS (INCLUDING DOOR SETS AND WINDOWS)

**OBJECTIVE:** BARRIERS SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BE EASILY PUSHED OVER OR PHYSICALLY DAMAGED, REDUCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BARRIER.

Is the strength and rigidity of the barrier sufficient to resist the forces applied that could reasonably be expected during normal usage? This can be assessed by an average sized adult pushing against the barrier at critical points (e.g. half way between vertical posts and the highest point of the barrier).

# HELPFUL TIPS

If you answered 'NO' to any of the questions, here are some pointers to help you improve the safety of your pool or spa barrier. However, you should seek professional advice if you are unsure how to make your barrier safe and whether a building permit or other approvals are required.

## STEP 1 – BARRIER

SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS MUST BE SURROUNDED BY A BARRIER RESTRICTING UNSUPERVISED ACCESS BY YOUNG CHILDREN.

- If you do not have one of the barrier types listed, obtain a building permit to install a barrier that meets the current requirements. Contact your local council or an appropriately registered building practitioner: you may search for one at [www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au)

## STEP 2 – FENCING (INCLUDING ASSOCIATED GATES)

FENCING MUST BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED TO ENSURE THAT:

- **It cannot be used as a climbing device for young children to access the pool area; and**
- **No surfaces close to the fence can be used as a climbing platform; and**
- **Young children cannot climb under the fence to access the pool area.**

- Install fencing to at least 1200 mm high.
- Remove all climbable objects (e.g. furniture, toys, pot plants, BBQs) from the clear space around the pool.
- Replace or install mesh with holes not greater than 13 mm or, if greater than 13 mm but less than 100 mm:
  - Install mesh at least 2400 mm high; or
  - Install a fence at least 1800 mm high with a cranked top that meets the angle dimensions.
  - Install or repair strainer wires or rails at the top and bottom of the fence.
- Replace or fix fencing so that the vertical and horizontal rails, rods, wires or bracing meet the spacing dimension requirements.
- Reduce openings at the bottom of the fence to no bigger than 100 mm.
- Remove or fix any potential footholds or handholds to meet the spacing dimension or slope requirements.

## STEP 3 – GATES AND FITTINGS

ALL GATES MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, DOORS AND GATES MUST RETURN TO THE CLOSED POSITION WHEN RELEASED.

- Install, fix or replace any gates that do not swing outwards, away from the pool.
- Repair, replace or adjust any self-locking or self-latching devices on gates that do not return the gate to the closed position.
- Replace any self-latching devices that can be adjusted without the use of tools.
- Raise the height or replace any self-locking or self-latching devices on gates that are not at least 1500 mm above the ground level.
- Raise the height or replace any gate latching and release devices so they meet the height requirements.
- Install a shield such to prevent inadvertent opening from the outside of the barrier.

## STEP 4 – WINDOWS

WINDOWS THAT FORM PART OF A BARRIER MUST NOT PROVIDE A PATHWAY INTO THE POOL AREA.

- Repair, replace or adjust any catch, bolt or other window stops to ensure the window cannot allow a 105 mm object to pass through the gap.
- Replace any fly screens that are not securely fixed.
- Install bars or a mesh screen.
- Replace or repair any window that is not strong or ridged.

**(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)**

# HELPFUL TIPS

## **STEP 5 – DOORSETS**

ALL DOORS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, MUST RETURN TO THE CLOSED POSITION WHEN RELEASED. YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH AND OPEN THE DOOR BY CLIMBING USING NEARBY FOOTHOLDS.

- Install, repair or replace self-closing devices to ensure the door returns to the closed position without manual force.
- Raise the height or replace any self-latching devices on doors that are not at least 1500 mm above the floor.
- Remove or adjust any footholds on doors near the latch release area to prevent climbing.

## **STEP 6 – RETAINING WALLS**

RETAINING WALLS MUST BE CONSTRUCTED SO THEY RESTRICT ACCESS BY YOUNG CHILDREN TO THE POOL AREA.

- Replace or re-build retaining walls so they meet the height, projections and indentations and slope dimensions and restrict access to the pool area.

## **STEP 7 – ABOVE GROUND POOLS**

OBJECTS SUCH AS LADDERS, PUMPS AND FILTERS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE USED AS A CLIMBING SURFACE TO ACCESS THE ABOVE GROUND POOL.

- Remove all climbable objects (e.g. ladders, pumps, filters) from the clear space around the above ground pool.
- Install a barrier that meets the current regulations if the walls of your above ground pool are less than 1200 mm high above the ground level or if they allow climbing.
- Install a compliant barrier not less than 1200 mm high around any ladder or other entry point to the pool or spa.

## **STEP 8 – STRENGTH AND RIGIDITY OF FENCING COMPONENTS**

BARRIERS SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BE EASILY PUSHED OVER OR PHYSICALLY DAMAGED, REDUCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BARRIER.

- Replace or repair any part of the barrier that does not have sufficient strength or rigidity.