

# VBA POOL AND SPA SAFETY BARRIER SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST 3

## FOR POOLS AND SPAS INSTALLED FROM 1 MAY 2010

**RELEVANT STANDARD: AS 1926.1 – 2007 (FOR BARRIER BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FROM 1 MAY 2010 TO 30 APRIL 2013)  
OR AS 1926.1 – 2012 (FOR BARRIER BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FROM 1 MAY 2013)**

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 inflatable 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.

Since 1 May 2010, all outdoor swimming pools and spas must not have direct access to the pool area via a door from a building, such as a house or a garage.

## THE SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST



This self-assessment checklist is intended to help pool and spa owners maintain the safety of pool barriers installed (or where a barrier for a building permit was issued) from 1 May 2010. The checklist applies to residential homes, 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.

### **BOUNDARY FENCE**

A dividing barrier between two properties.

### **NON-CLIMBABLE ZONE (NCZ)**

A space on or around a barrier intended to restrict young children from climbing the barrier to gain 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 permit was issued between 1 May 2010 and 30 April 2013, complete **Steps 2 to 8**.

b) If your pool or spa barrier permit was issued from 1 May 2013, complete **Steps 2 to 9**.

## STEP 2 – BARRIERS (INCLUDING ASSOCIATED GATES)

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

- they 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 barrier at least 1200 mm high?

# QUESTIONS

YES

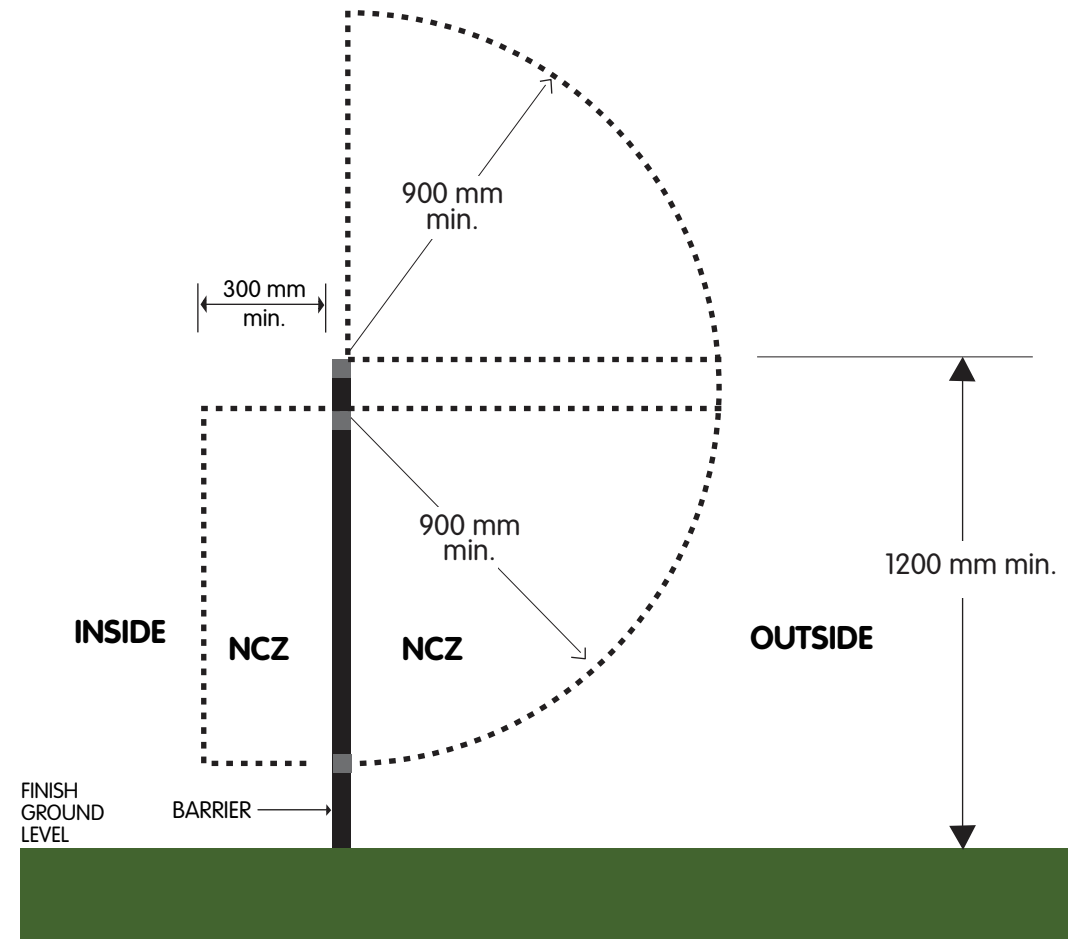
NO

# DIAGRAM

Are openings between the bottom of the barrier and the finished (compact and stabilised) ground level 100 mm or less?

Is there a 900 mm non-climbable zone (clear space) measured from the top of the barrier around the outside of the barrier (other than boundary fences) and is the non-climbable zone clear of any climbable objects?  
(Refer to diagram)

Is there a 300 mm non-climbable zone (clear space) on the inside of the barrier (other than boundary fences) and is the non-climbable zone clear of any climbable objects?  
(Refer to diagram)



# QUESTIONS

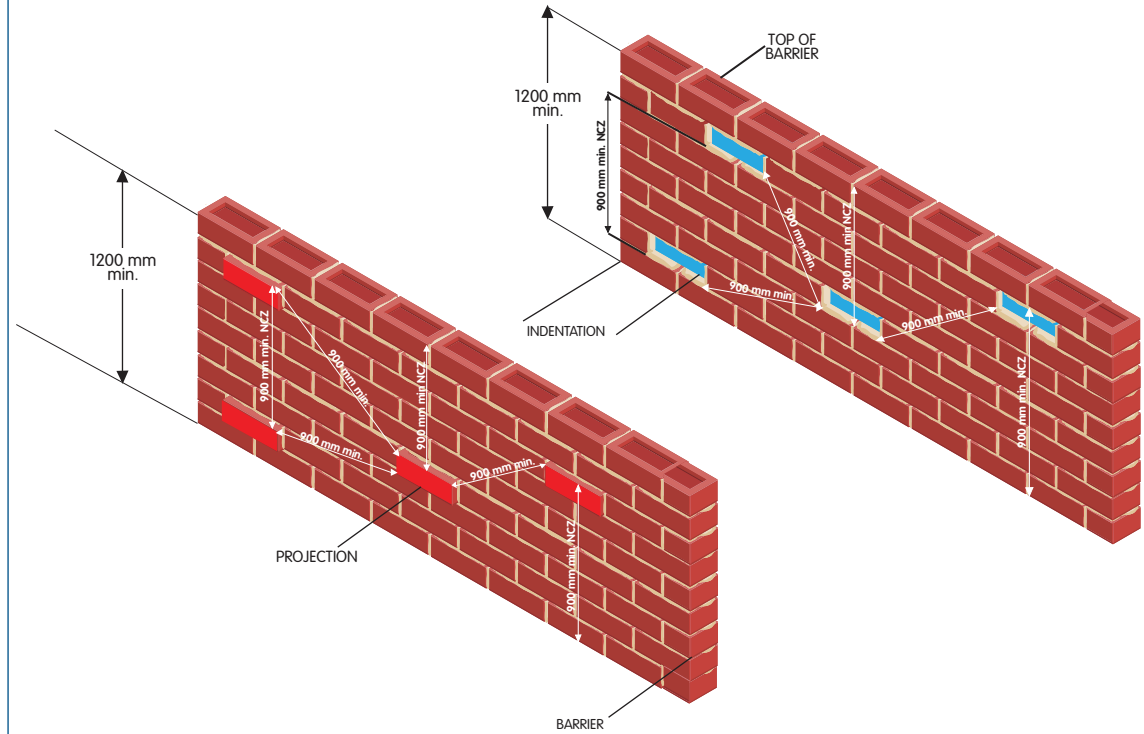
YES

NO

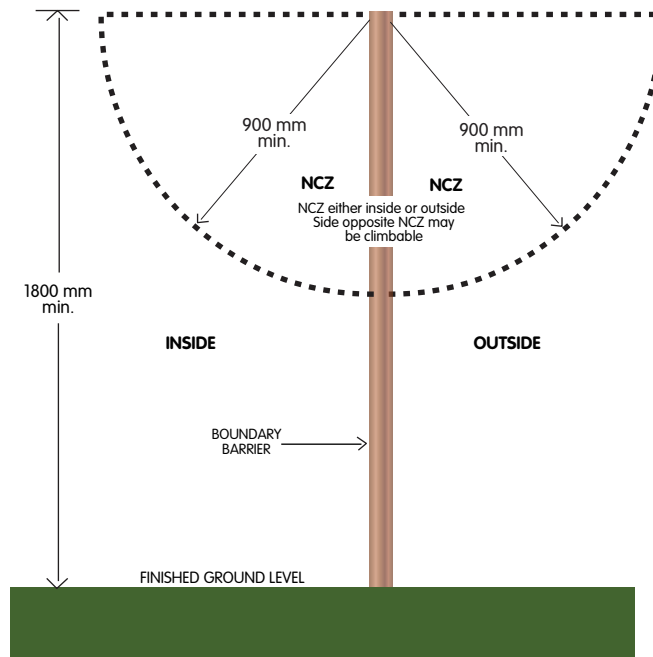
# DIAGRAM

Do all projections or indentations (potential footholds or handholds for children) within the non-climbable zone (clear space):

- have a depth of 10mm or less; or
- if they have a depth greater than 10 mm:
  - are lower surfaces not less than 900 mm from the top of the barrier; and
  - are higher surfaces not less than 900 mm above the finished ground level; and
  - are higher and lower surfaces at least 900 mm apart? (Refer to diagram)

For barriers installed from 1 May 2010 to 30 April 2013, do boundary fences have a non-climbable zone (clear space) of 900 mm at the top of the fence on the inside or outside of the fencing? (Refer to diagram)

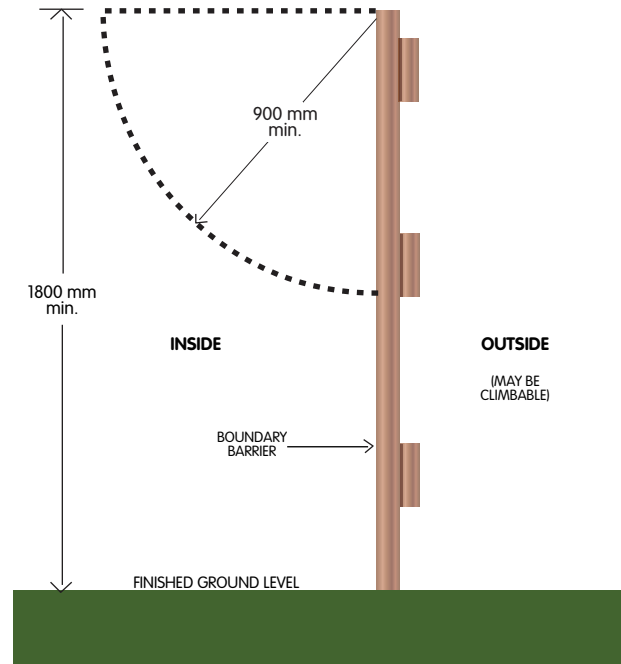
# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

For barriers installed from 1 May 2013, do boundary fences have a non-climbable zone (clear space) of 900 mm at the top of the fence on the inside of the barrier. (Refer to diagram)

If the barrier is constructed using perforated material or mesh with holes greater than 13 mm but not greater than 100 mm:

- is it at least 1800 mm high; and
- does it have strainer wires or rails at the top and bottom?



For barriers less than 1800 mm high, are horizontal elements, such as rails, rods, wires or bracing, that could be used as a handhold or foothold for climbing, at least 900 mm apart?



Are adjacent vertical elements, such as palings, rods, or wires, no further apart than 100 mm?



Are boundary fences at least 1800mm high?

# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

## 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.

Do gates providing access to the pool area swing outwards, away from the pool area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Are gate latching devices incapable of being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inadvertently adjusted during operation; or</li> <li>• locked in the open position; or</li> <li>• adjusted without the use of tools?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Are gate latch release devices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 1500 mm above the finished ground level; or</li> <li>• shielded for a radius of at least 450 mm from the latch release on the barrier with no opening in the shield greater than 10 mm to prevent inadvertent opening from outside the barrier?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For barriers installed from 1 May 2013, do gate hinges protrude from the barrier not more than 10mm, and is the opening between the gate post and the gate stile not more than 10mm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# QUESTIONS

YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

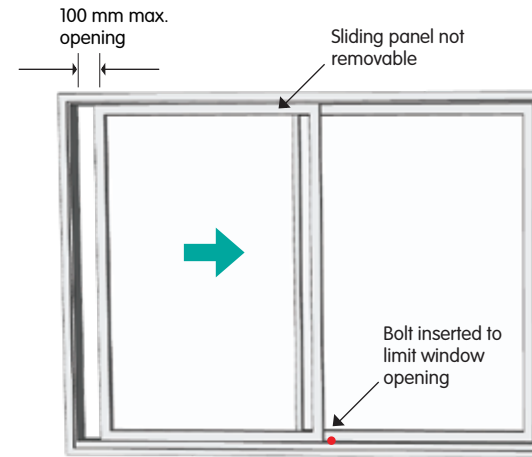
## STEP 4 – WINDOWS

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

Are all openable parts of a window at least 1800 mm above the pool area?

If not, are the openable parts of a window:

- covered by bars or a metal screen with maximum openings of 100 mm fixed by fasteners that can only be removed by the use of a tool  
(Refer to diagram); or
- restricted to opening to a maximum of 100 mm, by fasteners that can only be removed by the use of a tool?

## STEP 5 – DOORSETS (APPLIED TO INDOOR POOLS ONLY)

**OBJECTIVE:** DOORS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, DOORS 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 – ABOVE GROUND POOLS

**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 900 mm clear zone?



## STEP 7 – STRENGTH AND RIGIDITY OF FENCING COMPONENTS (INCLUDING DOORSETS 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).

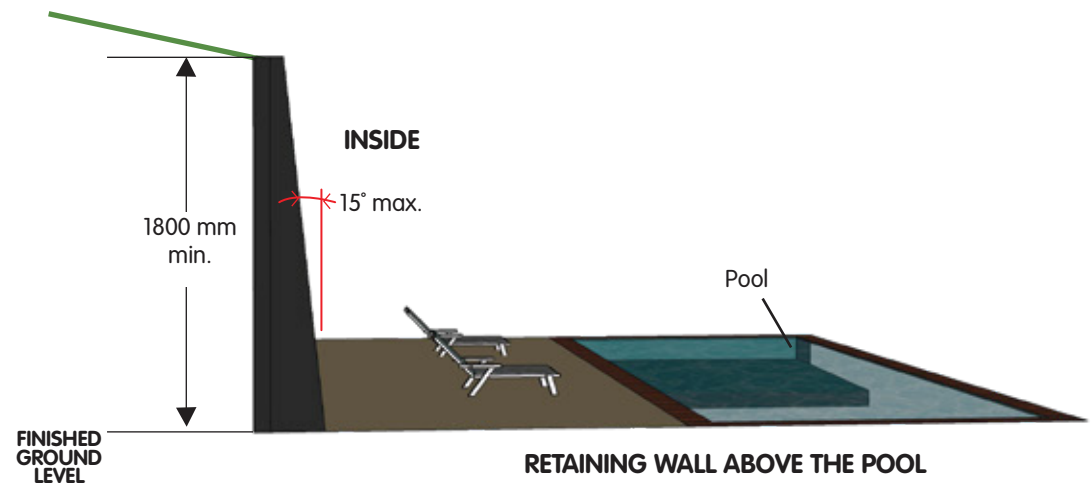


## STEP 8 – RETAINING WALLS

**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 above the pool level, does it:

- have an effective height of at least 1800 mm, or if the building permit was issued from 1 May 2013, at least 1200 mm with a surface that is resistant to climbing; and
- slope away from the pool by not more than 15 degrees to the vertical?  
(Refer to diagram)



# QUESTIONS

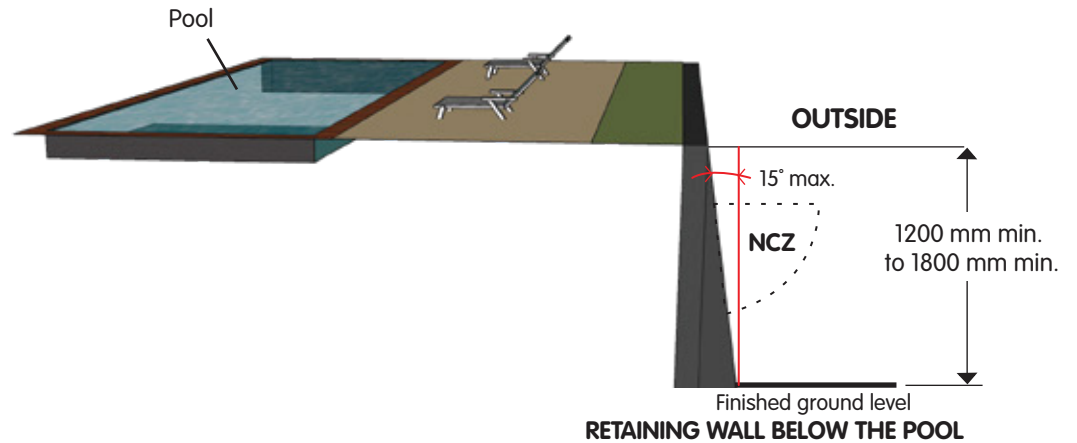
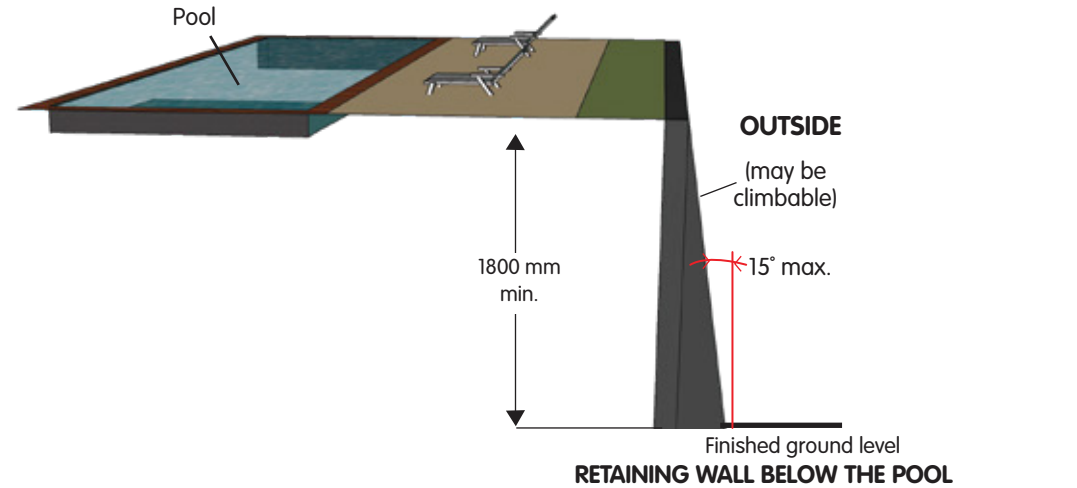
YES

NO

# DIAGRAM

If a retaining wall or similar structure forms part of the pool barrier below the pool level, does it:

- have an effective height of at least 1800 mm, or at least 1200 mm with a surface that is resistant to climbing including a 900 mm non-climbable zone; and
  - slope towards the pool by not more than 15 degrees to the vertical?
- (Refer to diagrams)



# QUESTIONS

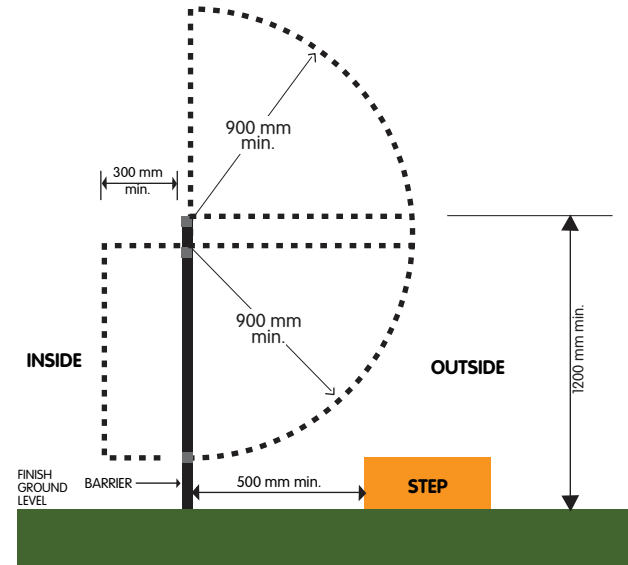
YES

NO

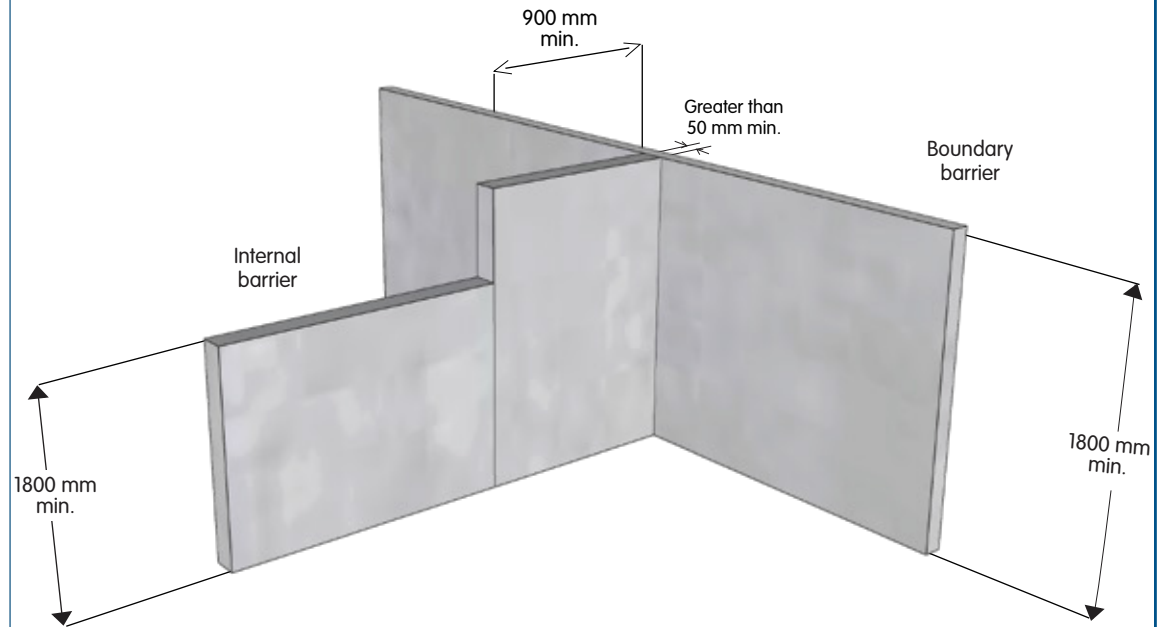
# DIAGRAM

## STEP 9 – FURTHER BARRIER REQUIREMENTS (APPLICABLE ONLY TO BARRIERS INSTALLED FROM 1 MAY 2013)

Are changes of level, such as steps, retaining walls or objects that would reduce the effective height of the barrier, more than 500 mm from the barrier? (Refer to diagram)



Do intersecting internal barriers where the top rail has a width greater than 50 mm have a height of not less than 1800 mm extending at least 900 mm from the intersection?



QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DIAGRAM
<p>Is the glass used in barriers visible, strong and safe? (Note: glass used in barriers must meet the glass safety standards of AS 1288 for glass used in buildings).</p>	<input data-bbox="759 229 862 312" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="922 229 1025 312" type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Do any footholds or handholds such as top and bottom pivot style hinges on glass gates, prevent climbing to restrict access to the pool area by young children?</p>	<input data-bbox="759 517 862 600" type="checkbox"/>	<input data-bbox="922 517 1025 600" type="checkbox"/>	

# 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 – BARRIERS (INCLUDING ASSOCIATED GATES)

BARRIERS MUST BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED TO ENSURE THAT:

- They 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 a barrier to at least 1200 mm high.
- Reduce openings at the bottom of the fence to no bigger than 100 mm.
- Remove all climbable objects (e.g. furniture, toys, pot plants, BBQs) from the clear space inside and outside of the barrier and near boundary fences.
- Remove or fix any potential footholds or handholds to meet the spacing dimension requirements to restrict young children from entering the pool area.
- Extend the height of any intersecting internal barriers to meet the dimension requirements.
- Replace or install mesh with holes not greater than 13 mm or, if greater than 13 mm, must be less than 100 mm and:
  - Install mesh at least 1800 mm high.
  - Install or repair strainer wires or rails at the top and bottom of the barrier.
- Replace or fix fencing so the vertical and horizontal rails, rods, wires or bracing meet the spacing dimension 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-closing 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 to prevent inadvertent opening from the outside of the barrier.
- Replace or adjust hinges so they do not protrude more than 10 mm or create an opening between the gate post and the gate of more than 10 mm.

## STEP 4 – WINDOWS

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

- Remove windows not at least 1800 mm above the pool area; or
- Install, repair or replace any bars or metal screens ensuring maximum openings of 100 mm; and repair, replace or adjust any fasteners so bars or screens can only be removed with a tool; or
- Repair, replace or adjust fasteners to ensure the window can only be opened to a maximum of 100 mm.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

# HELPFUL TIPS

## **STEP 5 – DOORSETS (FOR INDOOR POOLS ONLY)**

ALL DOORS MUST NOT BE ABLE TO BE OPENED BY YOUNG CHILDREN AND IF OPEN, DOORS 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 and self-latching devices to ensure the door returns to the closed position without manual force.
- Adjust self-latching devices to ensure the door automatically latches on closing.
- Adjust self-latching devices so they are located inside the building at least 1500 mm above the floor.
- Remove or adjust any footholds on doors near the latch release area to prevent climbing to access the latch release.

## **STEP 6 – 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 7 – 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.

## **STEP 8 – 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 9 – FURTHER BARRIER REQUIREMENTS**

- Remove or rebuild any steps, retaining walls or other objects that reduce the effective height of the barrier.
- Replace glass used in barriers to that complying with the Australian Standard for glass used in building.
- Remove or adjust any hinges on glass gates to restrict access to the pool area by young children.