



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ENCLOSURES AROUND EXISTING PUBLIC POOLS

Many older apartment complexes were constructed with courtyard style pools, where the apartments open directly into the pool area. The absence of a barrier between the living units and the pool inherently increases the risk of drowning for small children. It is for this reason that many insurance companies have been requiring the installation of an additional barrier between the living units and the pool, even though there is already an enclosure present that meets minimum pool code requirements. **Even though the Orange County Health Care Agency is not requiring additional enclosures to be constructed, when one is constructed, it must meet current minimum standards.**

Whenever a new fence or enclosure is proposed to be installed around an existing pool, a plan (drawn to scale) must be submitted to the plan check department of Environmental Health for review and approval before construction of the enclosure is started. The plan should show the following:

- Layout of the pool(s) with the surrounding buildings
- Location of the enclosure with all gates or doors
- Elevation drawings drawn to scale $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'0''$, of the enclosure and all gates or doors with latch location
- Decking clearances around the pool(s)

The following are the minimum requirements for new enclosures/fences around public pools and spas, as found in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Section 3118B:

- The pool shall be enclosed by a fence or portion of a building wall not less than five (5) feet in height, as measured from the outside of the enclosure.
- Openings, holes or gaps in the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches.
- The enclosure shall be constructed over a hard and permanent material equivalent to concrete.
- Chain link may be used, provided that openings are not greater than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches, measured horizontally.
- The enclosure shall be designed and constructed so that it is not readily climbable by small children. Horizontal and diagonal member designs, which might serve as a ladder for small children, are prohibited. Horizontal members shall be spaced at least four (4) feet apart. Planters or other climbable structures shall not be permitted immediately adjacent to the fence.
- Gates and doors shall be equipped with self-closing and self-latching devices. The self-latching device shall keep the gate or door securely closed. Hand activated door or gate opening hardware shall be located at a height no lower than 42 inches but no higher than 44 inches above the deck or walkway.
- Gates and doors shall open outwardly, away from the pool, except where otherwise prohibited by law.

(OVER)

- The pool enclosure shall have at least one means of egress without a key for emergency purposes. This gate or door must be clearly and conspicuously labeled in letters 4" high, "Emergency Exit". If all gates and doors are keyless exits, then no "Emergency Exit" sign need be posted.
- Gates and doors shall be capable of being locked during times when the pool is closed.
- The enclosure shall be constructed so that all persons will be required to pass through common pool enclosure gates or doors in order to gain access to the pool area.
- At least four (4) feet of clear, unobstructed decking must be provided around the entire perimeter of a swimming pool and around at least fifty percent of a spa pool.

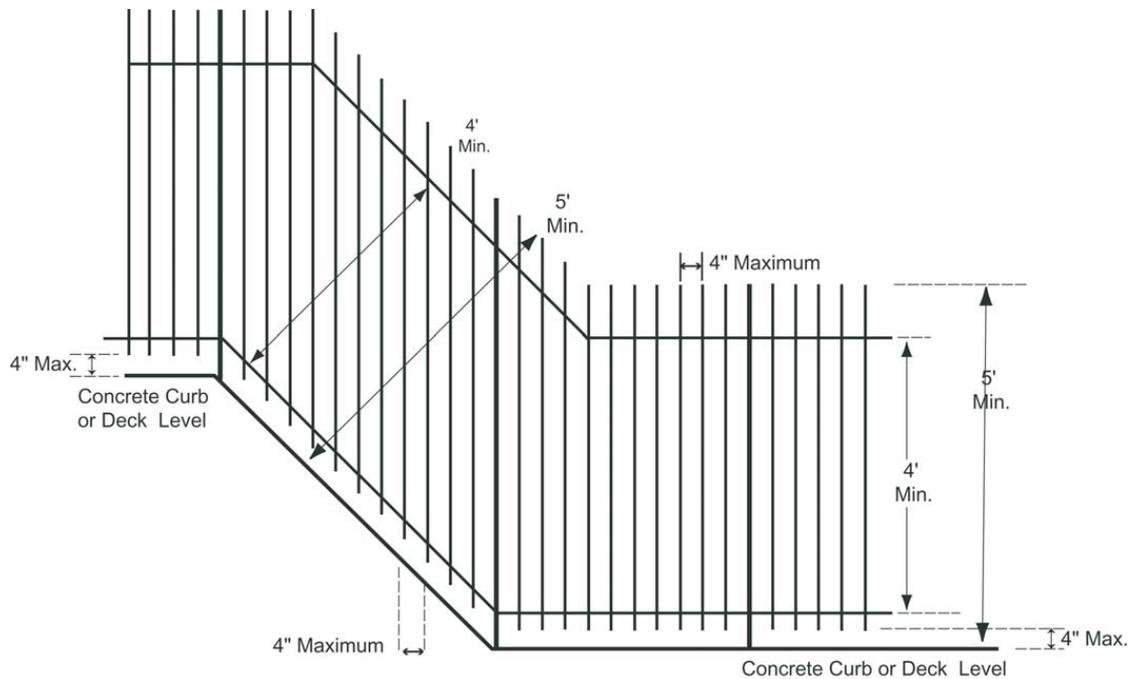


FIGURE 31B-4 PERPENDICULAR FENCING DIMENSIONS ON SLOPING GROUND

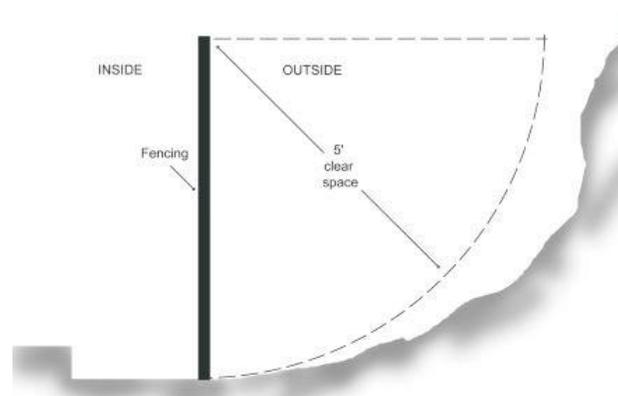


FIGURE 31B-5 EFFECTIVE FENCING HEIGHT

Prior to installing an enclosure around a pool or spa, contact your local building official in order to determine their requirements. Whenever there is a difference between local building codes and health codes, the more stringent requirement will be enforced.

For additional information, contact Environmental Health at (714) 433-6074 and ask for the Plan Checker of the Day.