



City of Urbandale
3600 86th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322-4057

Building Department (515) 278-3930
Fax No. (515) 278-3927

Swimming Pool Fences and Safety Devices Regulations

A swimming pool is any structure intended for swimming, recreational bathing or wading that contains water over 18 inches deep (per Urbandale Zoning Ordinance) and must comply with the 2003 International Building Code Section 3109. This includes in-ground, above-ground and on-ground pools; hot tubs; spas and fixed-in-place wading pools. The Urbandale Zoning Ordinance also requires swimming pools to be at least 10 feet from property lines.

Public swimming pools. Public swimming pools must be completely enclosed by a fence at least *72 inches in height or a screen enclosure. Openings in the fence must not permit the passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere. The fence or screen enclosure must be equipped with self-closing and self-latching gates.

Residential swimming pools. Residential swimming pools must be completely enclosed by a barrier as described below. **Exception:** A swimming pool with a power safety cover or a spa with a safety cover complying with ASTM F 1346.

Barrier height and clearances. The top of the barrier should be at least *72 inches above grade measured on the side of the barrier that faces away from the swimming pool. The maximum vertical clearance between grade and the bottom of the barrier must be 2 inches measured on the side of the barrier that faces away from the swimming pool. Where the top of the pool structure is above grade, the barrier is authorized to be at ground level or mounted on top of the pool structure, the maximum vertical clearance between the top of the pool structure and the bottom of the barrier must be 4 inches.

Openings. Openings in the barrier must not allow passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere.

Solid barrier surfaces. Solid barriers, which do not have openings, must not contain indentations or protrusions except for normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints.

Closely spaced horizontal members.

Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is less than 45 inches, the horizontal members must be located on the swimming pool side of the fence. Spacing between vertical members must not exceed 1.75 inches in width. Where there are decorative cutouts within vertical members, spacing within the cutouts must not exceed 1.75 inches in width.

Widely spaced horizontal members. Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is 45 inches or more, spacing between vertical members must not exceed 4 inches. Where there are decorative cutouts within vertical members, spacing within the cutouts must not exceed 1.75 inches in width.

Chain link dimensions. Maximum mesh size for chain link fences is 2.25 inch square unless the fence is provided with slats fastened at the top or the bottom which reduce the openings to no more than 1.75 inches.

Diagonal members. Where the barrier is composed of diagonal members, the maximum opening formed by the diagonal members is 1.75 inches.

Gates. Access gates must comply with the requirements of a barrier and must be equipped to accommodate a locking device. Pedestrian access gates must open outward away from the pool and must be self-closing and have a self-latching device. Gates other than pedestrian access gates must have a self-latching device. Where the release mechanism of the self-latching device is located less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism must be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3 inches below the top of the gate, and the gate and barrier must have no opening greater than 0.5 inch within 18 inches of the release mechanism.

Dwelling wall as a barrier. Where a wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier, one of the following must apply:

1. Doors with direct access to the pool through that wall must be equipped with an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door and its screen are opened. The alarm must sound continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds immediately after the door is opened and be capable of being heard throughout the house during normal household activities. The alarm must automatically reset under all conditions. The alarm must be equipped with a manual means to temporarily deactivate the alarm for a single opening. Such deactivation must last no more than 15 seconds. The deactivation switch must be located at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door.
2. The pool must be equipped with a power safety cover which complies with ASTM F 1346.
3. Other means of protection, such as self-closing doors with self-latching devices, which are approved by the administrative authority, may be accepted so long as the degree of protection afforded is not less than the protection afforded by item 1 or 2.

Pool structure as barrier. Where an aboveground pool structure is used as a barrier or where the barrier is mounted on top of the pool structure, and the means of access is a ladder or steps, then the ladder or steps either must be capable of being secured, locked or removed to prevent access, or the ladder or steps must be surrounded by a barrier. When the ladder or steps are secured, locked or removed, any opening created can not allow the passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere.

Indoor swimming pools. Walls surrounding indoor swimming pools may not be required to have alarms, power safety covers or self-closing doors with self-latching devices.

Prohibited locations. Barriers must be located so as to prohibit permanent structures, equipment or similar objects from being used to climb the barriers.

Entrapment avoidance. Where the suction inlet system, such as an automatic cleaning system, is a vacuum cleaner system which has a single suction inlet, or multiple suction inlets which can be isolated by valves, each suction inlet must protect against user entrapment by an approved antivortex cover, a 12-inch by 12-inch or larger grate, or other approved means. In addition, all pools and spas must be equipped with an alternative backup system which should provide vacuum relief should grate covers be missing. Alternative vacuum relief devices must include one of the following:

1. Approved vacuum release system.
2. Approved vent piping.
3. Other approved devices or means.

* Urbandale Ordinance 2005-24 Section 4.7002

Call Before You Dig: Call "One Call" for utility locations before you begin digging, at 1-800-292-8989. Utility locations are typically completed within 48 hours of your request. Underground utility location prior to digging is required by state law. This service is free of charge.

Required Inspections

1. **Pins and Setbacks**
The property corner pins must be exposed to view and the locations for the fence corner posts marked. If the property corner pins cannot be found, it is the owner's responsibility to have a registered land surveyor or civil engineer establish these points.
2. **Final Inspection**