



# County of Santa Cruz

## Health Services Agency - Environmental Health

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### Swimming Pool and Spa Enclosure and Fencing Requirements

A plan review submittal and project approval are required prior to modifying the enclosure or fencing around a public or commercial pool. Any fencing that is replaced is subject to current code requirements. The following must be submitted for review:

1. Plan Review Application and fee
2. Swimming Pool and Spa Enclosure Plan Review Form or plans including:
  - ✓ Layout of the existing pool(s) with the surrounding buildings
  - ✓ Location of the current enclosure
  - ✓ Location of the new or replacement enclosure with all gates or doors
  - ✓ Decking clearances around the pool(s) and under the fence
  - ✓ Detailed profile elevation showing fencing height, building materials (ie. Iron, chain link, wood, glass), distance off the ground, distance between vertical and horizontal cross bars, posts or supports, opening dimensions of chain link fencing, and any other details related to the type of fencing
  - ✓ Detailed profile elevation of the entry gates showing gate height, distance off the ground, horizontal and vertical bars, opening dimensions for chain link fencing, location of mesh, latch height, self-closing device, presence of any panic bars

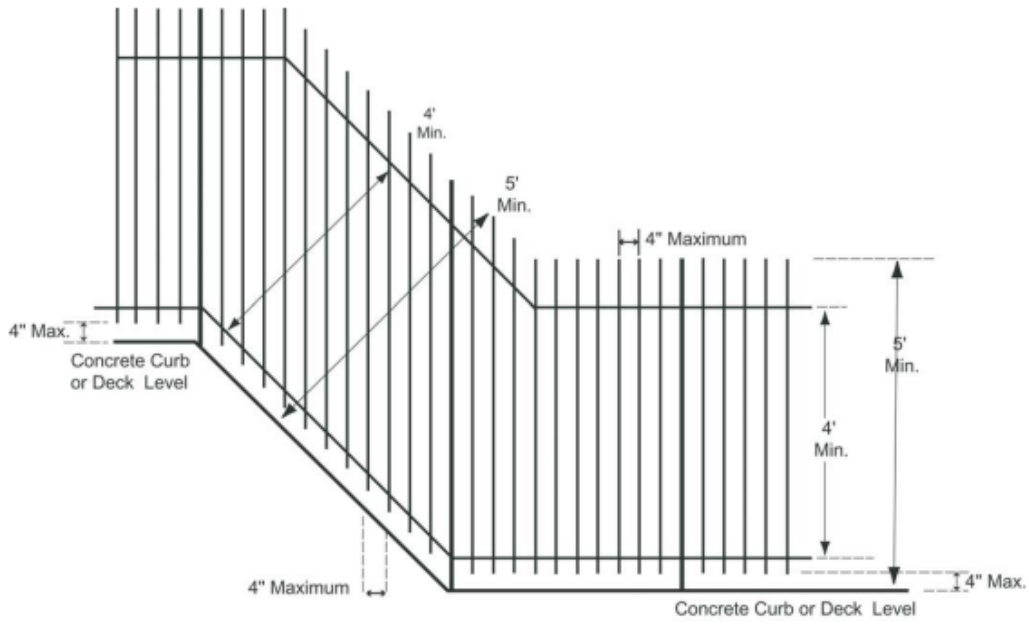
The following are the minimum requirements for new enclosures/fences around public pools and spas, as found in Title 24 of the California Building Code, section 3118B and Santa Cruz County policy on application (See images below for details):

- 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 shall not allow the passage of a **4-inch sphere** below, through, or around the enclosure.
- The enclosure shall be **constructed over concrete or equivalent**.
- Chain link may be used, provided openings are not greater than 1¾ 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.

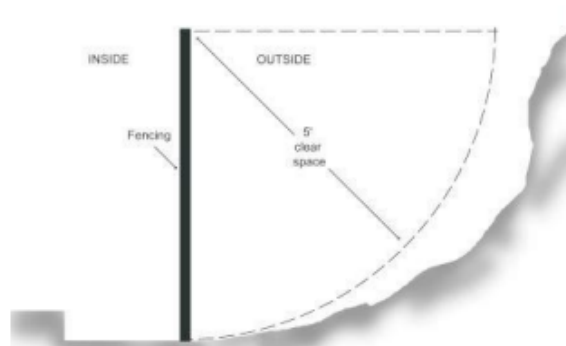
- No vertical structural components, trees or other climbable landscaping shall be present within 5 feet of the fence.
- No planters or other climbable structures shall be present against the inside of the enclosure if openings allow a foot to pass through and be used to overcome the fencing.
- Gates 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.
- 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 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.

Some older apartment complexes were constructed with courtyard style pools, where the apartments open directly into the pool area and/or with operable windows that open 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. These types of conditions would need to be addressed at this time and may be subject to compliance during inspection.

This guidance document covers requirements enforced by the Environmental Health Division. Contact your local building department to determine if any other requirements apply to your project.



**FIGURE 31B-4 PERPENDICULAR FENCING DIMENSIONS ON SLOPING GROUND**



**FIGURE 31B-5 EFFECTIVE FENCING HEIGHT**