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# ***ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN***

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## **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 your District Environmental Health Specialist for review and approval before construction of the enclosure is started. The plan should show the following:

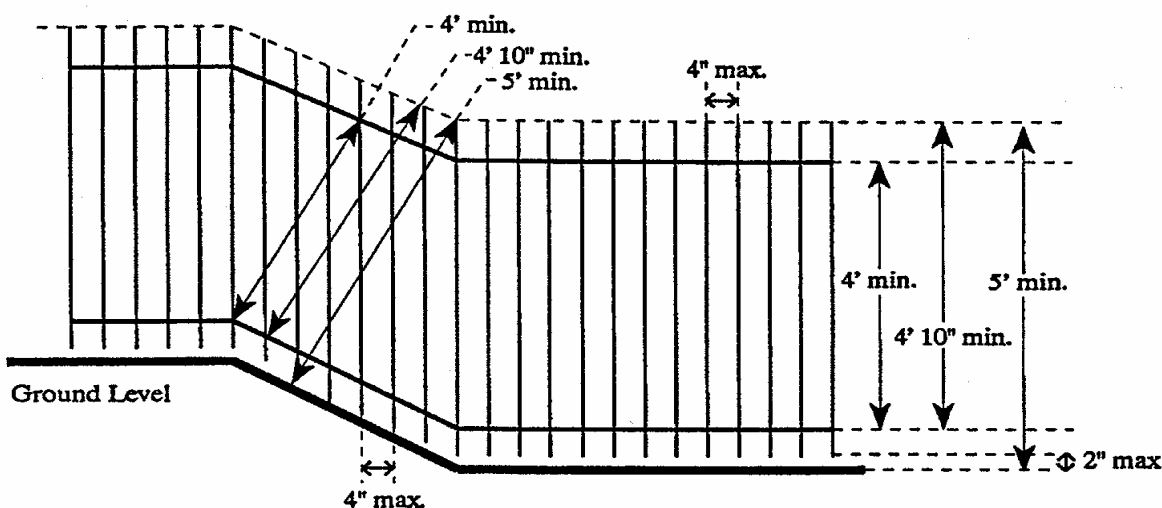
- Layout of the pool(s)
- Layout of the surrounding buildings
- Location of the enclosure
- Location of all gates or doors in the enclosure
- Location of the steps and ladders in the pool(s)
- Decking clearances around the pool(s)

**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:**

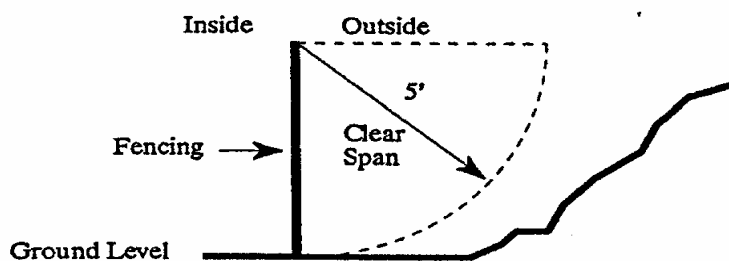
- The pool shall be enclosed by a fence or portion of a building wall not less than five (5) feet in height, as measured from the outside of the enclosure.
- Openings, holes or gaps in the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches.
- The bottom of the enclosure shall be within two (2) inches of the finished grade.
- Chain link may be used, provided that 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. 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 be designed to keep the gate or door securely closed. Hand activated door or gate opening hardware shall be located at least 3½ feet above the deck or walkway.
- Gates and doors shall open outward, 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 allowing access to the pool area must be capable of being locked when the pool is closed.
- Auxiliary areas such as laundry rooms and gyms may not be accessed exclusively through the pool enclosure.
- 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) 433-6000 and ask for the District Environmental Health Specialist that covers your area.