



**City of Des Moines
Permit and Development Center**

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Pool Barrier Requirements Checklist

This checklist is intended to inform homeowners and contractors of the minimum barrier requirements when considering the appropriate safety barrier for swimming pools. The checklist below is only a basic summary of the pool barrier requirements found in the *2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code* as adopted by the City of Des Moines.

These code requirements are **not** retroactive. Therefore, you will **not** be required to upgrade your existing swimming pool barrier if it was permitted and constructed in accordance with previous City codes. These requirements **do** apply to newly constructed barriers and alterations to existing barriers.

Swimming Pool-Any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing capable of containing water over 24 inches deep. This includes in-ground, above-ground and on-ground swimming pools, hot tubs and spas.

Pools Must be Surrounded by a Barrier Fence:

- Fences or barriers must be located to prohibit permanent structures, equipment or similar objects from being used to climb them.
- The top of the fence or barrier must be at least 48 inches above the ground measured on the side which faces away from the pool. Such height shall exist around the entire perimeter of the barrier and for a distance of 3 feet measure horizontally from the outside of the required barrier.
- The bottom of the fence or barrier must be no more than 2 inches from the ground.
- There cannot be any holes or openings that would allow a 4 inch ball to pass through.
- Solid fences (i.e. masonry or stone) must not have indentations or protrusions other than those normal for construction.
- When fences are constructed of horizontal and vertical members, and the horizontal members are spaced **less** than 45 inches apart:
 - The horizontal members must be located on the pool side of the barrier.
 - The vertical member spacing cannot exceed $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
 - The spacing of decorative cutouts within vertical members cannot exceed $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
- When fences are constructed of horizontal and vertical members, and the horizontal members are spaced forty-five inches or **more** apart:
 - The vertical members must be spaced less than four inches apart.
 - The spacing of decorative cutouts within vertical members cannot exceed $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
- Chain link fences must have a maximum mesh size of $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch square. Where slats are provided which are fastened at the top and bottom of the fence that will reduce the openings, such openings shall not be more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
- Fences with diagonal members, such as lattice fence, cannot have openings larger than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Spas or hot tubs

Spas or hot tubs with a safety cover which complies with ASTM F 1346 are exempt from the pool barrier requirements.

Gates

- Must meet the same construction requirements as fences.
- Pedestrian gates must swing outward from the pool area.
- Pedestrian gates must also be self-closing and self-latching and able to accommodate a lock.
- Non-pedestrian access gates must be self-latching and be able to accommodate a lock.
- Latches must have the release mechanism located at least 54 inches from the bottom of the gate or must comply with **all** of the following:
 - The release mechanism must be located on the pool side of the gate at least three inches below the top of the gate; **and**
 - The gate and barrier must have no opening larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch within 18 inches of the release mechanism.

House Wall Barrier

Where the wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier, **one** of the following conditions must be met:

- The pool must be equipped with a powered safety cover in compliance with ASTM F 1346; **or**
- Operable windows having a sill height of less than 48 inches above the indoor finished floor having direct access to the pool and doors leading to the pool through the barrier must have an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door, window and/or its screen are opened. Alarm deactivation switches must be located at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door; **or**
- Another means of protection, such as self-closing doors with self-latching devices, which are approved by the Building Official, may be acceptable as long as the degree of protection afforded is not less than the protection afforded by the Items listed above.
- Walls surrounding residential indoor swimming pools must meet these same requirements.