

# Pool Barrier Safety Requirements

Installed 8 April 1991 – 30 April 2010

## Pool Barrier Safety Requirements

Information for existing pools and spas constructed between 8 April 1991 and 30 April 2010

This information applies to the following buildings that had a pool or spa installed between **8 April 1991 and 30 April 2010**:

- Dwellings
- Hostels
- Hotels
- Motels
- Retirement villages
- Boarding houses
- Or similar dwelling or occupancy.

Enjoying the water is a great Australian pastime, but owning or building a pool comes with strict safety responsibilities that apply all-year-round. Australian standards require you to ensure that your fencing is properly installed, fully compliant and adequately maintained.

All swimming pools and spas on residential properties in Victoria capable of holding water to a depth of 30cm (300mm) or more are required to be surrounded by a pool barrier. This includes bathing, wading, inflatable, above ground, indoor pools, hot tubs and jacuzzis.

All gates, windows, fences or walls forming part of a pool barrier must be kept in good working order at all times.

**Applicable Australian standard AS1926.1-1993**

### Fencing

The pool barrier must be at least 1.2m high.

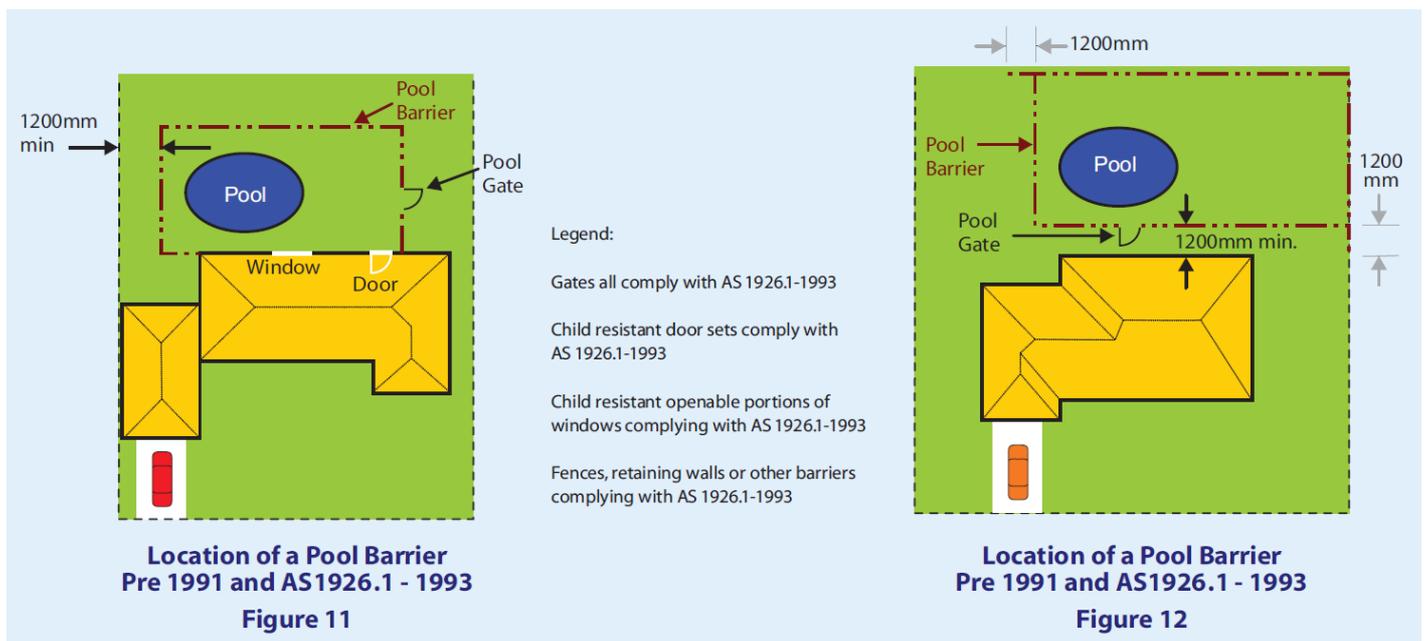
- For fencing constructed of perforated or mesh material with apertures more than 13mm but less than 100mm, the effective height must be a minimum 2.4m and have strainer wires or rails at the top and bottom of the fence.
- A 1.2m clear space must extend around the outside of a pool barrier.
- A 0.3m clear space must extend around the inside of a pool barrier.
- The gap between the bottom of the pool barrier and the ground cannot exceed 100mm.
- A boundary fence must be at least 2.4m high.
- The strength and rigidity of pool barrier components and elements must comply with AS 1926.1-1993 Appendix A.
- If a retaining wall or similar structure forms part of the pool barrier it must have a minimum height of 1.2m and a maximum lean of 15 degrees (measured from vertical) and be non-climbable in accordance with AS 1926.1-1993.
- Projections or indentations (potential footholds or handholds for children) on the outside surface of the pool barrier must not exceed 10mm.
- Horizontal (or near horizontal) fencing components, such as rails, rods, wires or bracing, that could be used as holds for climbing must be greater than 900mm apart. The top of the highest bottom horizontal must be at least 1.1m below the top of the fence
  - if located on the outside of the pool barrier, or
  - if located on the inside of the pool barrier and the verticals are spaced more than 10mm apart,
- The clear gap between adjacent verticals (or near verticals) must not be more than 100mm.

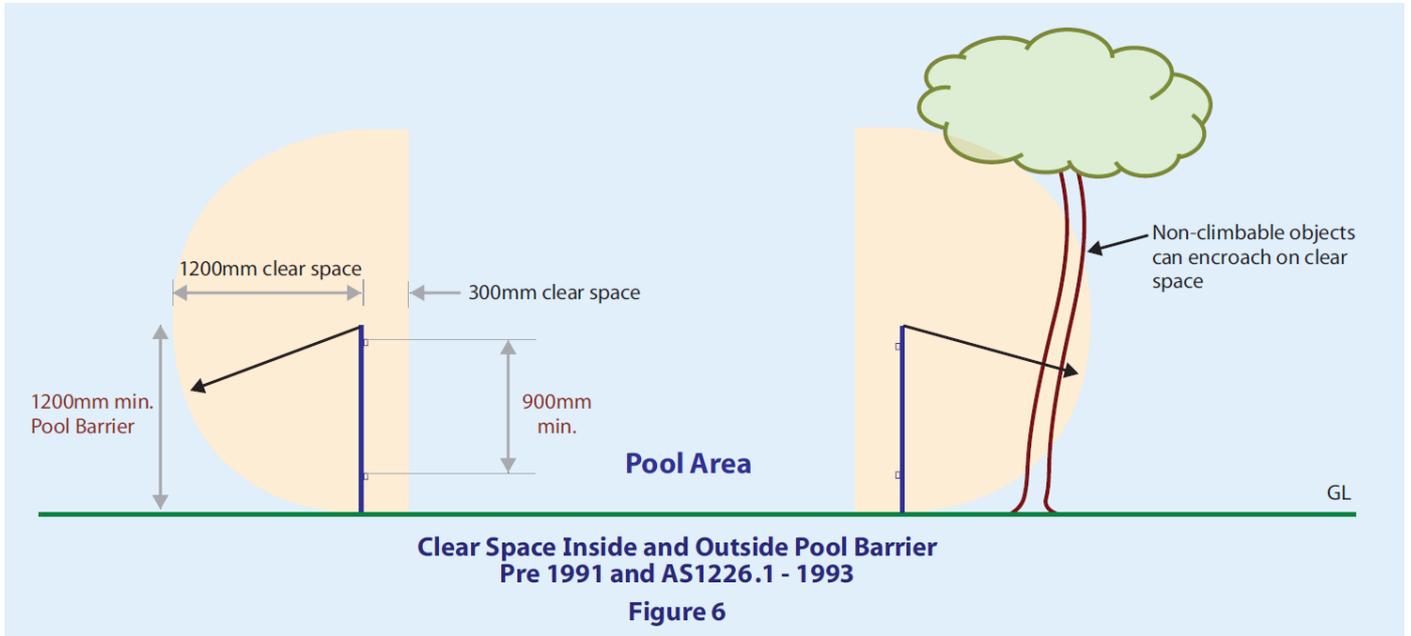
## Doors, gates and fittings

Doors, gates and fittings must comply with the relevant requirements of AS 1926.1–1993:

Any doors, gates or fittings must:

- Swing outwards away from the pool area.
- Be fitted with a self-closing device that will return the gate to the closed position and engage the latching device:
  - from any position from resting on the latching mechanism to fully open, and
  - from a stationary start without using manual force.
- Be fitted with a self-latching device:
  - that will automatically operate on the closing of the gate/door and prevent the gate from being reopened without manual release, and
  - that cannot be inadvertently adjusted in operation or adjusted without the use of tools, and
  - located and shielded in accordance with one of the options shown AS 1926.1-1993, or
  - the latching device must be a minimum 1.5m above surface level on the approach side.





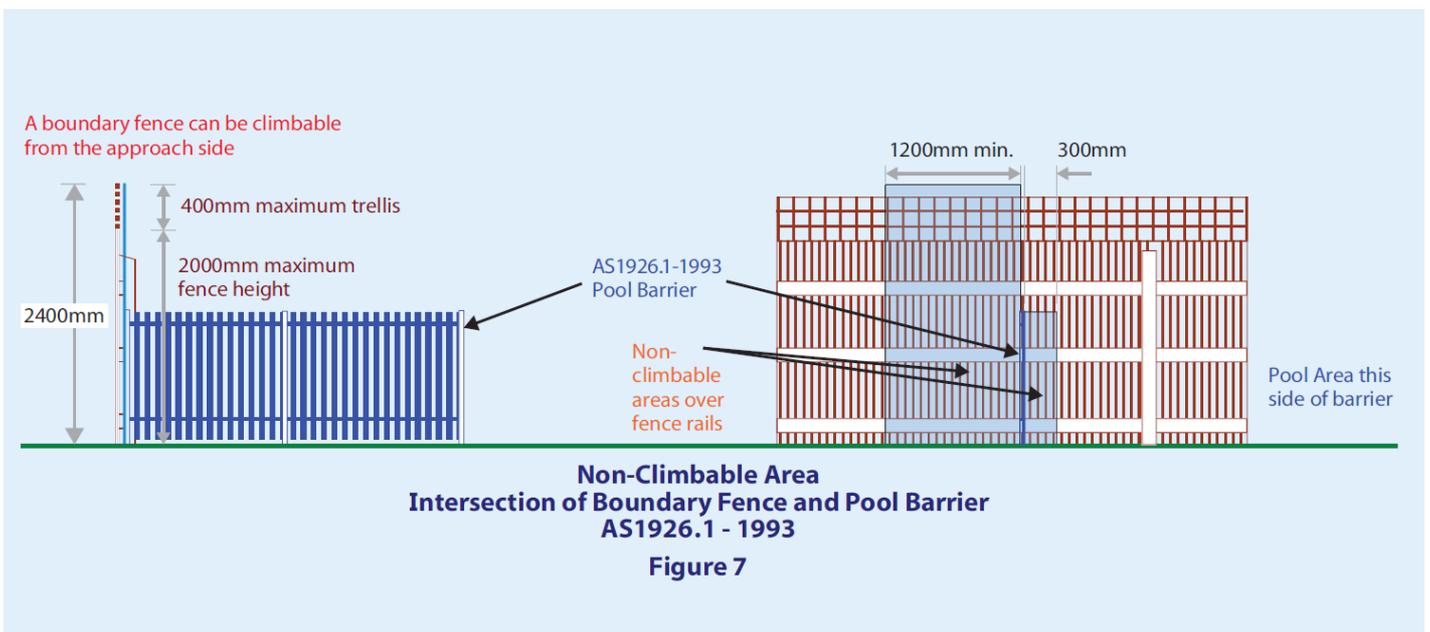
## Existing building walls and windows

The existing wall of a building can be used as a pool barrier as long as it complies with the following regulations:

- Any doors or gates within the wall are fitted with a self-latching or self-locking device, with the opening mechanism located at least 1.5m above the ground or internal floor level, and
- Has a device that returns the door or gate to the closed position without using manual force.

Any window within the wall:

- Is located 2.4m above the external paving or ground level, or
- Is greater than 1.2m above the floor level of the room containing the window, or
- The window must have a maximum opening of 100mm.



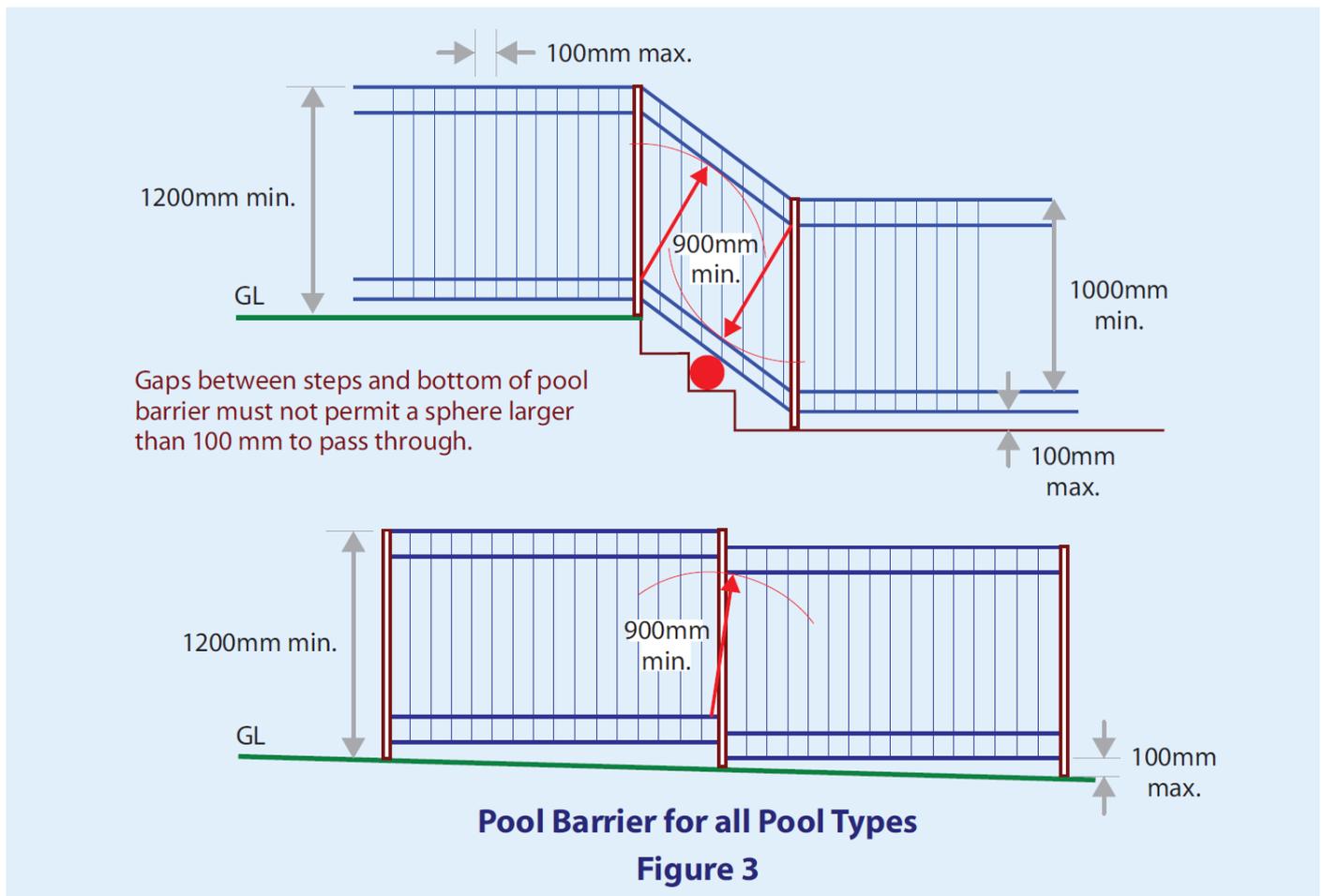
## Above ground pools

Above ground pools do require a pool barrier to protect access to the ladder, pump and filter, which a child could use to climb into the pool. The pool barrier must be 0.3m clear of any part of the ladder, pump, filter or any other climbable object.

The wall of an above ground pool can form part of a pool barrier provided the walls of the pool are a minimum of 1.2m high above ground level and are non-climbable.

## Important information when upgrading your pools and/or pool fence

In accordance with the Building Regulations, all work on swimming pool and pools barrier, requires a building permit, and must be completed within six months of work starting and prior to the pool being filled.



## Additional resources

For more information and resources, such as the Kid Safe Victoria pool safety checklist, please refer to [knox.vic.gov.au/pools](http://knox.vic.gov.au/pools)

### Quick facts

- If a Victorian residential pool or spa has a depth of 30cm or more (300mm), it is required to be surrounded by safety barrier. This includes inflatable pools.
- Placing a cover or lid over a swimming pool or spa does not comply and is not acceptable. A safety barrier is required.
- Safety barriers must be a minimum of 1.2 metres high.
- Barrier gates must be self-closing and self-latching.
- It is illegal to leave a pool or spa gate, or any door or window leading to a pool, propped open.
- Climbable objects such as pot plants, eskies, pool pumps and chairs must be moved away from the barrier.
- A building permit is required to install a swimming pool or spa and safety fence and barriers.
- A swimming pool or spa must not be filled until the pool barrier is completed and approved by the Relevant Building Surveyor.
- A Swimming Pool capable of containing a water level of less than 300mm and that is emptied after each use does not require a pool barrier.