

GOOCHLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION
SWIMMING POOL AND SPA - CODES AND PERMITS

Applicable Code:

Construction requirements for residential swimming pools and spas are contained in the Virginia Residential Code. Chapter 42 covers the electrical equipment and wiring. The 2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code addresses the safety barrier.

Electrical:

To ensure proper installation of the equipment and the correct bonding and grounding methods, we recommend that the electrical work be done by a licensed electrical contractor familiar with pool electrical systems. An electrical permit is required when installing receptacles or power to pool equipment.

Barrier:

The function of the barrier around a pool or spa is to prevent accidental drowning of small children. The proper construction of the barrier ensures a safe method to keep small children from entering the pool area without adult supervision. The barrier consists of the fence, gates and sometimes doors to the dwelling. To ensure that the construction of the pool barrier is carried by a responsible person, a permit is required specifically for the barrier. See an example of details on our website under **Pool Barrier Drawings**.

Barrier Fence:

Pool barrier fences may be constructed out of an assortment of materials. To help clarify the language contained in the code, descriptive illustrations have been provided. The fence shall be at least 48 inches above the ground on the side away from the pool. The fence shall not allow a 4-inch ball to pass through. The most important feature of the fence material is that it shall not be climbable.

Barrier gates:

Pool fence gates shall be self-closing, self-latching and swing away from the pool enclosure. The latch shall be mounted at least 54 inches above the ground. If the latch is less than 54 inches above the ground, the latch shall be on the inside of the fence and there can be no openings in the gate or fence bigger than ½ inch within 18 inches of the latch.

House doors as part of the barrier:

If the pool barrier fence utilizes the house as a portion of the barrier, then all doors opening into the pool enclosure shall be converted to operate like a barrier gate (self-closing, self-latching) with the door latch mounted 54 inches above the threshold or the doors shall be equipped with alarms. The door alarms shall be automatic and loud enough to be heard throughout the house. They shall remain active unless an automated pool cover is installed.

Permits:

Required permits for swimming pools and spas include building and electrical permits for construction of the pool or spa ***and*** a building permit for construction of the required barrier.

- Exception: Above-ground pools where the pool wall is a minimum of 48 inches above the ground for the entire perimeter with a removable ladder only and spas with a safety cover meeting the criteria of ASTM F-1346. In this case, only the pool or spa building and electrical permits are needed.
- Exception: Swimming pools with a surface area not greater than 150 square feet, that do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are less than 24 inches deep do not require building permits.

Application Review:

Pool and spa application documents must include a site plan showing the exact location on the lot along with lot lines and setbacks. Pool or spa structural drawings are also required.

Barrier permit application documents must include a site plan showing the extent of the barrier and details on gates, fencing and door alarms if the house is part of the barrier.

Pool and spa permits will not be issued until the barrier permit has been approved and issued -- no exceptions.

Construction:

For in-ground pools, once excavation for the pool has begun, a minimum 48-inch-high temporary barrier must be erected and maintained until the permanent barrier is completed. Occupancy of the pool or spa is prohibited without an approved final inspection.

Inspection:

To verify the maintenance of temporary barriers during construction, the project will automatically be inspected by the County inspector on a monthly basis.

Final Approval:

Final inspection for the pool or spa includes the barrier. If the barrier is incomplete, the pool will not be approved and cannot be used. Using the pool without approval is violation of the Virginia Residential Code.