



## Alexandria Health Department

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In cooperation with the  
Virginia Department of Health


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Environmental Health Division

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### MEMORANDUM

To: Applicants for Building Permits for Private Swimming Pools and  
Outdoor Spa Pools at Single Family Homes

From: Bob Custard, R.E.H.S., Manager   
Environmental Health Division  
Alexandria Health Department

Subject: Fencing and Access Control Requirements for Private Pools and Spas

Date: April 17, 2003

The Alexandria City Code requires that private residential swimming pools and spa pools have adequate fencing or access control. The purpose of this ordinance is to prevent the accidental drowning of children who enter pools or spas without adequate adult supervision.

Residential swimming pools must be enclosed with a fence or equivalent barrier at least six feet in height.

Outdoor spa pools (including therapeutic pools, hydrotherapy pools, whirlpools, hot spas, and hot tubs) must be completely enclosed by a fence or equivalent barrier at least six feet in height or must be installed with a lockable cover.

In order to streamline the plan review process, the Alexandria Health Department will no longer review plans for access control structures at pools and spas at single family homes. Instead, the Code Enforcement Division will, on behalf of the Health Department, stamp plans with a statement citing the code requirement. Separate plan review and inspection by the Health Department will no longer be required.

Plans for private outdoor pools at single family homes will be stamped with the following statement:

#### NOTICE

#### Health Department Requirements for Private Pools at Single Family Homes

**“Residential swimming pools must be enclosed with a fence or equivalent barrier at least six feet in height.”**

Plans for private outdoor spa pools (including therapeutic pools, hydrotherapy pools, whirlpools, hot spas, and hot tubs) at single family homes will be stamped with the following statement:

**“NOTICE**

**Health Department Requirements for Outdoor Spa Pools at Single Family Homes**

**Outdoor spa pools (including therapeutic pools, hydrotherapy pools, whirlpools, hot spas, and hot tubs) must be completely enclosed by a fence or equivalent barrier at least six feet in height or must be installed with a lockable cover.”**

As in the past, indoor private pools or spa pools in single family homes are exempted from the access control requirements of the code since it is assumed that the property resident has adequate control over access by others to all portions of the interior of their home.

If you have questions about this policy please contact Joe Fiander, R.E.H.S., Environmental Health Specialist Senior at (703) 838-4400 Ext.255.

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION 20-6**  
**Regulation of Swimming Pools, Spa Pools and Health Clubs**  
**(selected portions thereof)**

**20-6-4 Definitions.**

(d) Director. The director of health or his or her designee.

(z) Residential swimming pool or spa pool. Any constructed swimming pool or spa pool which is used or intended to be used as a swimming pool or spa pool in connection with single family units. Residential swimming pools and spa pools shall only be required to comply with the fencing requirements of this chapter.

(dd) Spa pool. Any structure, basin, chamber or tank, located either indoors or, outdoors or both, containing a body of water intended to be used for recreational and therapeutic use which usually contains a waterjet and/or aeration system, is operated at high temperatures, and is not drained, cleaned or refilled after each individual use. The term includes, but is not limited to, units designed for hydrojet circulation, hot water, cold water, mineral bath, air induction bubbles, or any combination thereof. Common terminology for a spa pool includes, but is not limited to, "therapeutic pool", "hydrotherapy pool," "whirlpool," "hot spa," and "hot tub."

**20-6-43 Fencing and barriers. (for pools)**

All pool areas shall be completely enclosed with a fence, or equivalent barrier, at least six (6) feet in height, measured from the outside and shall have at least one gate of four (4) feet minimum width. The fence or barrier shall afford no external handholds or footholds. The director must approve the material used to construct such a fence or equivalent barrier. Gates in this enclosure shall be self-closing and shall have latches or locks placed at least forty-eight (48) inches above the ground. Emergency and service gates having a horizontal opening of eight (8) feet shall be provided for outdoor pools. The horizontal open space between vertical members of the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches. The height of any opening under the bottom of the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches. The fence(s) or barrier(s) may be shared with that enclosing a spa pool.

**20-6-72 Fencing and barriers. (for spa pools)**

(a) All outdoor spa areas shall be completely enclosed with a fence, or equivalent barrier, at least six (6) feet in height, and shall have at least one (1) gate of four (4) feet minimum width. The fence or barrier shall afford no external handholds or footholds. The material used to construct the fence or barrier shall be approved by the director. Gates in this enclosure shall be self-closing and shall have latches or locks at least forty-six (46) inches from the bottom of the barrier. The horizontal open space between vertical members of the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches. The height of any opening under the bottom of the enclosure shall not exceed four (4) inches. The fence(s) or barrier(s) may be shared with that enclosing a swimming pool area. Notwithstanding the prior provisions of this subsection, residential spa pools equipped with a protective cover capable of being securely locked shall be deemed to satisfy this subsection.

(b) For indoor facilities, suitable barriers to prevent access of unauthorized individuals must be provided. If the security method is not by locked doors, then the barrier method must be one acceptable to the director.