

Residential Pool Safety Guidelines

This document advises the public of the legal requirements for pool ownership specified in A.R.S. § 36-1681 and the Arizona Department of Health Services' (Department) recommendations for proper pool safety.

A.R.S. § 36-1681(A) requires that a swimming pool or other contained body of water be “protected by an enclosure.” According to A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(1), a swimming pool or other contained body of water must be “entirely enclosed by at least a five foot wall, fence or other barrier.” The five foot wall, fence, or other barrier:

1. Must not have openings through which a “spherical object four inches in diameter can pass” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(2));
2. Must not have “openings, handholds or footholds accessible from the exterior side of the enclosure that can be used to climb the wall, fence or barrier” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(4)); and
3. Must “be at least twenty inches from the water’s edge” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(5)).

According to A.R.S. § 36-1681(C), if a residence or living area makes up part of the enclosure required by A.R.S. § 36-1681(B), there must be:

1. A wall, fence, or barrier located between the swimming pool or other contained body of water and the residence or living area that:
 - a. Has a height of at least four feet (A.R.S. § 36-1681(C)(1));
 - b. Has no openings “through which a spherical object four inches in diameter can pass” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(2));
 - c. Has no “openings, handholds, or footholds accessible from the exterior side of the enclosure that can be used to climb the wall, fence or barrier” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(4)); and
 - d. Is at a distance of “at least twenty inches from the water’s edge” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(5));
2. “A motorized safety pool cover” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(C)(2));
3. For each door or window in the residence or living area that has direct access to the pool:
 - a. A self-latching device that is located “not less than fifty-four inches above the floor” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(C)(3)); and
 - b. Either a “screwed in place wire mesh screen” covering a dwelling or guest room window or a keyed lock that prevents a dwelling or guest room window from opening more than four inches (A.R.S. § 36-1681(C)(3)); or
4. For an aboveground swimming pool, “non-climbable exterior sides which are a minimum height of four feet” and access ladders or steps that are removable and able to be secured when the pool is not in use (A.R.S. 36-1681(C)(4)).

Any gate in either the five-foot-tall wall, fence, or barrier enclosing a pool (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(1)) or the four-foot-tall wall, fence, or other barrier between a residence or other living area and a pool (A.R.S. § 36-1681(C)(1)) must:

1. “Open outward from the pool” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(3)(b));
2. Be “self-closing and self-latching” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(3)(a)); and
3. Have a latch:

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- a. Located “at least fifty-four inches above the underlying ground” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(3)(a));
- b. Located on the pool side of the gate with the latch’s release mechanism located “at least five inches below the top of the gate and no opening greater than one-half inch within twenty-four inches of the release mechanism” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(3)(a));
or
- c. “Located at any height if secured by a padlock or similar device which requires a key, electric opener or integral combination” (A.R.S. § 36-1681(B)(3)(a)).

In addition to the requirements of A.R.S. § 36-1681, the Department recommends the following:

- 1. Never leave a child unattended in the pool or pool area;
- 2. Because flotation devices and swimming lessons are not substitutes for supervision, a child should always be watched when in or around the pool area;
- 3. CPR/CCR instructions and the 911 emergency number (or local emergency number) should be posted in the pool area;
- 4. A phone should be located in the pool area or easily accessible in case of an emergency;
- 5. All residential pool owners should attend water rescue and CPR/CCR classes;
- 6. Lifesaving equipment should be easily accessible and stored in the pool area;
- 7. All gate locks and latches should be checked regularly to insure they are working properly;
- 8. A gate should never be left propped open;
- 9. All items that could be used to climb a pool barrier should be removed from around the barrier; and
- 10. In an emergency:
 - a. Shout for help;
 - b. Pull the child from the water;
 - c. Call 911 (or the local emergency number) for help; and
 - d. After checking the child’s airway and breathing, immediately begin CPR/CRR if necessary.