

Department of Building Safety

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Fencing guidelines for Pools, Spas, and Hot Tubs

All swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, and other water features designed to hold 24" or more of water (such as man-made lakes and ponds) shall be fully enclosed by a continuous fence with a minimum height of four (4) feet at its lowest point, when measured from finished grade to the top of the fence. The maximum clearance between the finished grade and the bottom edge of the fence is two (2) inches.

In order to comply with the City Zoning Code, fencing installed around a water feature must conform to the following standards:

1. The top of the barrier shall be at least 48 inches above grade measured on the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool. The maximum vertical clearance between grade and the bottom of the barrier shall be 2 inches measured on the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool. Where the top of the pool structure is above grade, such as an above-ground pool, the barrier may be at ground level, such as the pool structure, or mounted on top of the pool structure. Where the barrier is mounted on top of the pool structure, the maximum vertical clearance between the top of the pool structure and the bottom of the barrier shall be 4 inches.
2. Openings in the barrier shall not allow passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere.
3. Solid barriers which do not have openings, such as a masonry or stone wall, shall not contain indentations or protrusions except for normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints.
4. Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is less than 45 inches, the horizontal members shall be located on the swimming pool side of the fence. Spacing between vertical members shall not exceed 1 3/4 inches in width. Where there are decorative cutouts within vertical members, spacing within the cutouts shall not exceed 1 3/4 inches in width.
5. Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is 45 inches or more, spacing between vertical members shall not exceed 4 inches. Where there are decorative cutouts within vertical members, spacing within the cutouts shall not exceed 1 3/4 inches in width.
6. Maximum mesh size for chain link fences shall be a 2 1/4 inch square unless the fence has slats fastened at the top or the bottom which reduce the openings to not more than 1 3/4 inches.
7. Where the barrier is composed of diagonal members, such as a lattice fence, the maximum opening formed by the diagonal members shall not be more than 1 3/4 inches.
8. Access gates shall comply with the requirements of items 1 through 7, and shall be equipped to accommodate a locking device. Pedestrian access gates shall open outward away from the pool and shall be self-closing and have a self-latching device. Gates other than pedestrian access gates shall have a self-latching device. Where the release mechanism of the self-latching device is located less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate, the release mechanism and openings shall comply with the following:
 - 8.1. The release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3 inches below the top of the gate; and
 - 8.2. The gate and barrier shall have no opening larger than 1/2 inch within 18 inches of the release mechanism.
9. Where a wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier, one of the following conditions shall be met:
 - 9.2. Doors with direct access to the pool through that wall shall be equipped with an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door and/or its screen, if present, are opened. The alarm shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 2017. The deactivation switch(es) shall be located at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door; or
 - 9.3. Other means of protection, such as self-closing doors with self-latching devices, which are approved by the City of O'Fallon, shall be acceptable as long as the degree of protection afforded is not less than the protection afforded by Item 9.1 or 9.2 described above.
10. Where an above-ground pool structure is used as a barrier or where the barrier is mounted on top of the pool structure, and the means of access is a ladder or steps:
 - 10.1. The ladder or steps shall be surrounded by a barrier which meets the requirements of items 1 through 9. When the ladder or steps are secured, locked or removed, any opening created shall not allow the passage of a 4-inch-diameter (102 mm) sphere.
11. Per Ordinance #7133, Section 305.2.4 of the 2021 International Pool & Spa Code, mesh fences have been deleted in its entirety.

Indoor swimming pool. Walls surrounding an indoor swimming pool shall comply with item 9 above.

Prohibited locations. Barriers shall be located to prohibit permanent structures, equipment or similar objects from being used to climb them.

Barrier exceptions. Spas or hot tubs with a safety cover which complies with ASTM F 1346 shall be exempt from these provisions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON FENCING/DECORATIVE POSTS, PLEASE CONTACT THE BUILDING DIVISION AT 636.379.5660

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