	<p>Land Use Services Building and Safety Division Information Bulletin</p>	<p>Number: IB-0007</p>
		<p>Code References: HSC Article 2.5 2025 CRC 2025 CBC</p>
<p>Building Official Signature:</p>	<p><i>Maged Soliman</i> Maged Soliman, PE, CBO</p>	<p>Original Effective Date: August 15, 2018</p>
<p>Subject: Swimming Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Barrier Requirements in a Private Single-Family Home</p>		<p>Updated: January 1, 2026</p>

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to clarify local requirements related to the construction of swimming pools, spas and hot tubs within the County as adopted in the San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances. The requirements identify selected California Building Codes, but it may not identify all applicable requirements; the user of this handout must comply with all code requirements. All California Codes are available online at www.bsc.ca.gov.

2.0 HISTORY

Original Effective Date: August 15, 2018; Updated: January 1, 2026

3.0 POLICY/PROCEDURE

AUTHORITY

The information provided in this handout is a summary of the swimming pool safety requirements contained in the California Building Code (CBC) Chapter 31 Section 3109, the California Residential Code (CRC) Appendix CI, the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) Article 2.5 (Sections 115920 - 115929) - "The Swimming Pool Safety Act", and the San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances.

DEFINITIONS

ENCLOSURE: a fence, wall or other barriers that isolates a swimming pool from access to the home.

APPROVED SAFETY POOL COVER: means a manually or power-operated safety pool cover that meets all of the performance standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), in compliance with standard F1346-91.

SWIMMING POOL or POOL: any structure intended for swimming or recreational bathing that contains water over 18 inches deep. Swimming pool includes in-ground and above-ground structures and includes, but is not limited to, hot tubs, spas, portable spas, and non-portable wading pools.

ADOPTED STANDARDS

A. Enclosure Requirements:

Pools shall be surrounded by a **permanent or movable enclosure** which shall comply with the following conditions:

1. The top of the enclosure shall be at least 60 inches above the grade measured on the side of the enclosure which faces away from the swimming pool. The maximum vertical clearance between the grade and the bottom of the enclosed fence/barrier shall be 2 inches.
2. Any decorative design work on the side away from the swimming pool, such as protrusions, indentations or cutouts, which render the enclosure easily climbable, is prohibited. The enclosure must be free of gaps or voids which allow passage of a sphere equal to or greater than 4 inches in diameter.

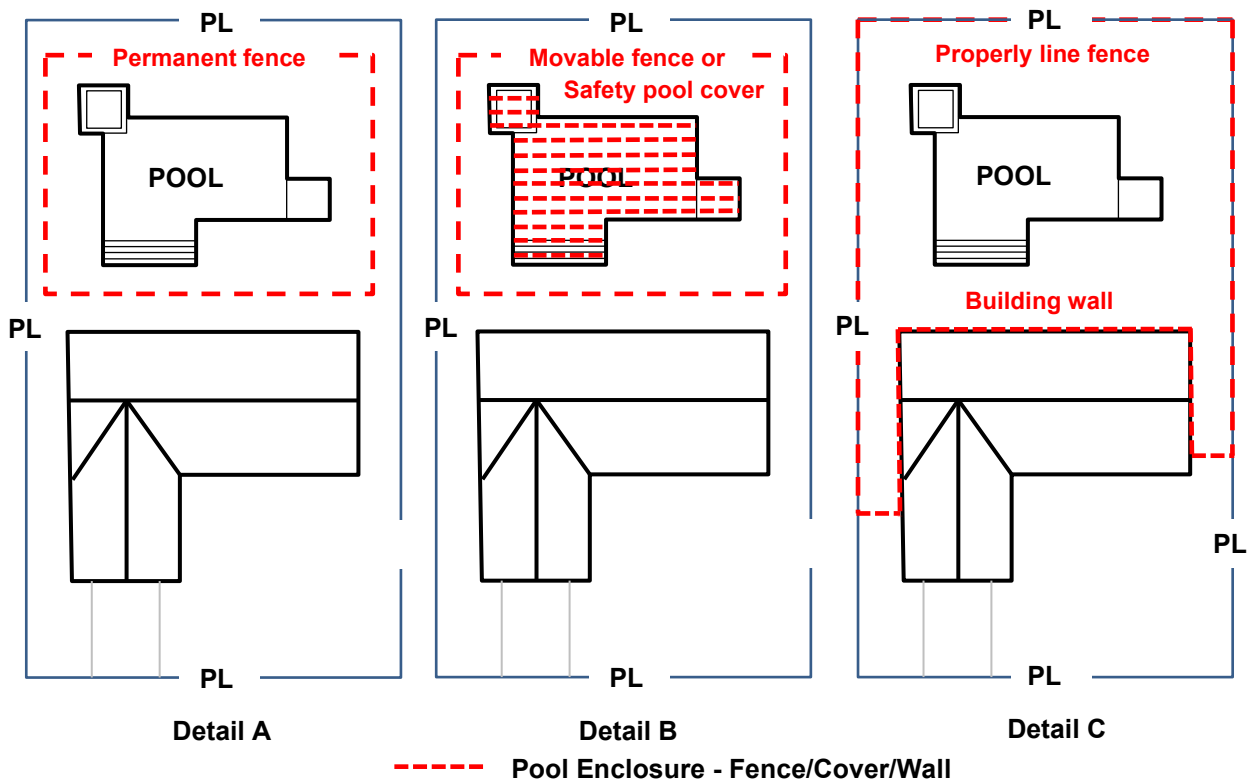


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3. Where the enclosed barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members, and the distance between two horizontal members is less than 45 inches, the horizontal members shall be located on the swimming pool side of the fence.
4. Maximum mesh size for chain link fences shall be a 1 1/2-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.
5. Access gates shall also comply with the requirements for enclosures, and shall be equipped to accommodate a locking device. Access gates shall open outward away from the pool, and shall be self-closing and have a self-latching device. Where the release mechanism of the self-latching device is located less than 60 inches from the ground, the release mechanism and openings shall comply with all of the following:
 - 5.1 The release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3 inches below the top of the gate.
 - 5.2 The gate and barrier shall have no opening larger than 1/2 inch within 18 inches of the release mechanism.
6. If movable mesh fencing is provided, it shall meet American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Specifications F2286 standards in conjunction with a gate that is self-closing and self-latching and can accommodate a key lockable device.
7. An **approved safety pool cover** as defined under DEFINITIONS above may substitute for the required pool enclosure.
8. Enclosures, accepted by the County of San Bernardino, can be configured in four different ways:



Detail A: The enclosure can surround the pool in conjunction with permanent fences.



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Detail B: The enclosure can surround the pool in conjunction with **movable** fences, or can cover the water surface in conjunction with an **approved safety pool cover**.

Detail C: The enclosure can be a combination of fences, portion of buildings or structures, walls and other approved barriers.

- 8.1 An enclosure that is a **permanent** fence surrounding the pool without utilizing any portion of buildings or structures (**Detail A**), shall comply with Section A, Items 1 through 5.
- 8.2 An enclosure that is a **movable** fence surrounding the pool (**Detail B**) or where a portion of building or structure serves as part of the enclosure **with doors** with direct access to the pool (**Detail C**), shall comply with Section A, Items 1 through 6, and **one additional item** under B. Drowning Prevention Safety Features, 1 through 4 below:
- 8.3 An enclosure that is an **approved safety pool cover** covering the pool water surface (**Detail B**), shall comply with Section A, Item 7, and **one additional item** under B. Drowning Prevention Safety Features, 1 through 4 below:

B. Drowning Prevention Safety Features:

1. Exit alarm on the private single family home's doors that provide direct access to swimming pool or spa, which may cause either an alarm noise or a verbal warning, such as a repeating notification that "the door to the pool is open".
2. A self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism placed no lower than 54 inches above the floor on the private single-family home's doors providing direct access to the swimming pool or spa.
3. An alarm that, when placed in a swimming pool or spa, will sound upon detection of accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. The alarm shall meet and be independently certified to the ASTM Standard F2208 "Standard Safety Specification for Residential Pool Alarms", which includes surface motion, pressure, sonar, laser, and infrared type alarms. A swimming protection alarm feature designed for individual use, including an alarm attached to a child that sounds when the child exceeds a certain distance or becomes submerged in water, is not a qualifying drowning prevention safety feature.
4. Other means of protection, if the degree of protection afforded is equal to or greater than that afforded by any of the features set forth above and has been independently verified by an approved testing laboratory as meeting standards for those features established by the ASTM or the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

C. Safety Requirements Adopted by County of San Bernardino:

1. Exit alarms shall comply with the following:
 - 1.1. Alarms shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 2017.
 - 1.2. Deactivation switch located 54" or more above the threshold of the door.
 - 1.3. Sound continuously for 30 seconds within 7 seconds of the door opening.
 - 1.4. Have a sound pressure level of 85 dBa or higher.
 - 1.5. Have a manual deactivation switch to deactivate the alarm for a single opening not to exceed 15 seconds.
2. Although most enclosure configurations have been stated, it is impossible to anticipate the infinite variety and combinations of materials that may be used. Where climbing or "step" conditions may be encountered, please check with the Building and Safety Division for approval prior to construction.



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3. The following doors and gates are prohibited as part of the pool enclosure due to intrinsic problems with self-closing or self-latching devices:
 - 3.1. Double doors or pairs of gates.
 - 3.2. Doors or gates wider than 4 feet.
 - 3.3. Driveway gates.
 - 3.4. Overhead garage doors.
4. Above-ground Pools: Enclosure requirements are the same for above-ground pools as are required for in-ground pools, unless the side walls of the above-ground pool form a complying barrier equivalent in height (5 feet high) and meet all the minimum enclosure requirements as described in the Section A above. 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, then:
 - 4.1. The ladder or steps shall be capable of being secured, locked or removed to prevent access; or
 - 4.2. The ladder or steps shall be surrounded by a barrier that meets the requirements of the Section A, Items 1 through 7.

Where the ladder or steps are secured, locked or removed, any opening created shall not allow the passage of a 4-inch-diameter sphere.