

## Swimming pool safety improvement strategy—stage two

### New and existing pools



The Queensland Government is seeking community feedback on the anticipated costs and benefits of new pool safety measures.

New pool safety regulations will come into effect in 2010. They will target new and existing indoor and outdoor pools associated with houses, residential units, hotels, motels, caretaker dwellings (class 1–4 buildings) and caravan parks.

The regulations are the second stage in a two-stage pool safety improvement program. Stage one came into effect on 1 December 2009 and applies to new outdoor residential swimming pools.

#### What is required under the stage two measures?

Under the proposed stage two measures, 12 different pool safety standards and over 100 local government laws will be simplified into one standard, making it easier for Queenslanders to understand their responsibilities.

The proposed stage two measures also include requirements to:

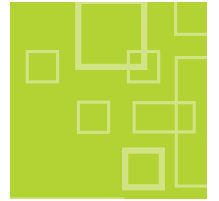
- fence portable pools that are 300 mm or more deep
- phase out child-resistant doors forming part of the safety barrier
- ensure local governments inspect pool fencing following an immersion incident or complaint
- remove pool barrier exemptions and variations granted by local governments so that all pools meet the same safety standards.

Under the proposed measures, pool owners will need to ensure their pool is registered within six months and

will have five years to meet the new pool safety standards unless they sell or lease their property first.

From 1 December 2010 it is proposed that a person will be unable to sell or lease their property until the pool safety barrier has been inspected and a compliance certificate issued. Research shows that there is a higher risk of a child drowning within the first six months of moving into a new home, with rental properties posing a greater risk. Inspections will be undertaken by a licensed pool safety inspector. Hotels, motels, holiday accommodation and other accommodation of a transient nature will have the same requirements, however will be managed in a staged approach.

The Queensland Government is working with industry to help ensure that trained and licensed pool safety inspectors are available to undertake the required inspections.



## How much will it cost to upgrade my pool safety barrier?

Over the first 10 years, the estimated average cost for pool owners to upgrade their fences to meet the new standard is \$430. Over the same 10-year period, where pool owners do not comply with the existing pool safety requirements, the average costs for upgrades is estimated to be an extra \$730.

A simple, quick and low cost appeal mechanism will be available where strict compliance is cost prohibitive and physically impractical.

Examples of remedial work required on pool barriers and associated costs include:

- fix window to open no more than 100 mm at a cost of up to \$350
- remove, shield or relocate climbable objects near the barrier (e.g. a tree, lattice or barbeque) at a cost of up to \$600
- create a fenced enclosure for doors that provide direct access to pool at a cost of up to \$1000
- increase the height of the fence or boundary fence at a cost of up to \$1400
- replace the entire fence at a cost of between \$3000 and \$5000 if the existing fence is beyond repair.

## Background

A total of 35 young children have drowned in residential swimming pools in the last six years and it is estimated that 50 young children are presented to emergency departments for immersion injuries each year, some of who will suffer brain damage due to lack of oxygen.



In December 2008 the Queensland Government established an independent swimming pool safety review committee to undertake the biggest review of Queensland's pool laws in nearly 20 years. The committee reported its findings in April 2009 and recommended 23 improvements to the existing pool safety laws.

Following extensive community and industry consultation, the Queensland Government adopted all 23 improvement ideas and, in 2009, announced Australia's toughest pool safety laws. The two-stage program has been established to implement these laws.

## Have your say

A regulatory impact statement is now open for consultation on specific stage two proposals. The consultation will assess the costs and benefits of the new pool standard and is

designed to determine whether or not the proposed regulation is the most efficient and effective way of achieving desired policy objectives.

To view the regulatory impact statement visit the Department of Infrastructure and Planning's website [www.dip.qld.gov.au/poolfencing](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/poolfencing) and to submit an online response form visit [www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au) by 16 May 2010.

## Post your comments to:

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