

## Do you need a permit?

It is the owner's responsibility to obtain a **building permit** before installing any private swimming pool, hot tub and spas with a water design depth greater than 600 mm (24") at any point. Local by-laws and provincial regulations governing when you need a permit may vary with the specific circumstances surrounding your project.

Always check with the permit issuing authority in your area prior to commencing any work on buildings covered by the current edition of the Alberta Building Code.

**Gas permits** are required to install or modify all gas-fired swimming pool heaters.

Gas-fired swimming pool heater (s) must be installed and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's certified instructions, and "*the current Natural Gas and Propane Installation Code.*"

Electrical work on any private pool installations will require an **Electrical Permit**.

To ensure safety, proper grounding and bonding of all non-current-carrying metal parts in and around the pool and ground fault circuit interruption devices must be provided as per "*the current Canadian Electrical Code.*" Outdoor installations must also satisfy minimum clearance requirements for all over-head and under-ground power lines.

## Where do I get a permit?

Permit (s) are available through municipalities that are accredited to administer the Safety Codes Act, and through agencies who provide inspection services on behalf of the province in non-accredited municipalities.

*If you are not certain on where to obtain the required permit (s) for projects located in your area or you have further questions on requirements for private swimming pool, hot tub and spas installations, please contact Alberta Municipal Affairs using the contact information provided on the back of this brochure to find out more.*

## Alberta's Safety System

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with the Safety Codes Council, municipalities, corporations, agencies, and other organizations, to deliver effective community-focused public safety programs and services to Albertans.

### Questions or more information:

#### Alberta Municipal Affairs

Safety Services Branch  
16th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4

Phone toll-free: 1 (866) 421 6929  
Fax: (780) 427 8686  
E-mail: [safety.services@gov.ab.ca](mailto:safety.services@gov.ab.ca)  
[www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca)

#### Safety Codes Council

Suite 1000, 10665 - Jasper Ave NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S9

Toll-free within Alberta:  
Phone: 1 (888) 413 0099  
Fax: 1 (888) 424 5134  
Email: [webmaster@safetycodes.ab.ca](mailto:webmaster@safetycodes.ab.ca)

Please place your agency or municipality contact information in the space below.

These brochures may be updated periodically. They have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.

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# Safety Tips

## Private Swimming Pools Hot Tubs and Spas



Alberta



# Private Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs and Spas

*Although the use of swimming pools is a wonderful way to enjoy the summer, caution needs to be exercised to prevent children from a disastrous encounter with a swimming pool.*

The Alberta Building Code (ABC) has specific safety requirements governing swimming pools and the placement of pools to protect you, and neighboring children who may be tempted to use your pool without you knowing it. Without supervision a child can easily drown in a swimming pool.

## Swimming pool design

Swimming pools come in basically three styles: in-ground, above-ground and on-ground types.

**NOTE:** Under the Alberta Building Code *Swimming pool* means a structure, basin or tank containing an artificially created pool of water that is greater than 600 mm (24") in depth at any point and is used for swimming, recreation, bathing, diving, wading, healing or therapy, religious rituals or other purposes, and includes all buildings, equipment and facilities used in connection with it.

## Private swimming pools

If a privately-owned pool has a water design depth greater than 600 mm (24") at any point (regardless of the pool's surface area and regardless of whether the pool has a water circulation system), then the pool is classified as a *private pool* for ABC purposes. Fence and gate requirements will then apply.

**NOTE:** These requirements are applicable even if the private swimming pool is designed for use as an on-ground swimming pool.

The **Alberta Building Code** states the following for fence and gate design and construction of private swimming pools and for their required protection:

## Fence and gate design

1) The entire area of an outdoor swimming pool shall be protected by a fence, building wall or enclosure that can prevent access by unauthorized persons and its height above the outside ground level shall not be less than;

- 1.8 m ( 6'-0" ) for a private swimming pool, and
- 2.0 m ( 6'-7" ) for all other swimming pools.

2.) An opening for access through a fence around a swimming pool or a private swimming pool shall be protected by a gate that is;

- the same height as the fence,
- equipped with a self-closing device,
- equipped with a self-latching device on the inside of the gate located not less than 1.5 m ( 5'-0" ) above the ground level, and
- capable of being locked.

3.) The fence and gate around a swimming pool or a private swimming pool shall be constructed so that all horizontal and diagonal members are located on the swimming pool side.

4.) Barbed wire shall not be used on or for a fence or gate around a swimming pool or private swimming pool.

5.) No device shall be installed on or adjacent to a fence or gate around a swimming pool or a private swimming pool that could cause an electric current to pass through the fence or gate.

**NOTE:** A fence is not required around any portion of an outdoor private swimming pool where the top of the outside wall of the private swimming pool is not less than 1.8 m ( 6'-0" ) above the level of the ground outside the wall and the wall is constructed so that the only means of access to the private swimming pool is through a gate or similar facility.

## Protective covers for hot tubs

Hot tubs and spas are viewed as special purpose pools and have similar requirements to protect people from drowning. In accordance with the Alberta Building Code, they are classified as swimming pools, if their water depth is greater than 600 mm ( 24 " ) at any point . As such, the same fence and gate design requirements will then apply when they are installed out of doors at a single family dwelling.

As an alternative to installing a fence and gate to prevent unauthorized access to your hot tub, a building code **VARIANCE** has been issued stating that a fence and gate conforming to the Alberta Building Code need not be provided around an exterior hot tub for a single family dwelling provided:

1. The hot tub does not exceed 2.4 m ( 8'-0" ) across the widest portion of the water's surface.
2. The hot tub is provided with a cover that;
  - a) has been designed and constructed in conformance with ASTM F1346-91, Standard Performance Specification for Safety Covers and Labeling Requirements for All Covers for Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs," and
  - b) is provided with lockable devices to prevent access to the water by unauthorized persons.