



## FENCING

### Q. Why do I have to fence my pool?

A. The fence acts as a barrier to the pool and as such, helps prevent access to the water by young children. In addition, pool fencing is a legal requirement in all States and Territories in Australia, and heavy penalties can be imposed for non-compliant pools. Royal Life Saving advises all parents and carers that supervision is the key to preventing toddler drowning deaths, but a fence with a self closing gate is essential in providing an extra line of protection. With toddlers' curious nature and fast feet, in no time at all they can be in the water.

### Q. What do I do on rural properties?

A. On rural properties, where it is not feasible to fence off a dam or lake, Royal Life Saving encourages parents to create a "child safe area" close to the home and away from water bodies. This area should be enclosed and you should supervise your child at all times in this area.

### Q. I don't have children, why do I need to fence my pool?

A. Not having children does not mean that a child will not drown in your pool. A significant percentage of toddler pool drowning deaths do not occur in their own backyard, but in relatives, friends or neighbours pools.

### Q. What sort of gate do I need?

A. The gate of the pool fence is crucial in preventing a child's access to the pool. Many people leave their pool gates propped open, or have gates that close but do not lock. A child does not need a great deal of strength to push open an unlocked gate. The gate to the pool must be both self closing and self latching.

### Q. How often should I check the fence to make sure it is in good working order?

A. Royal Life Saving recommends you conduct a thorough check of your fence every year before summer (and a quick check at least once a month) to ensure that it is not climbable, is in good repair, the gate when opened fully closes by itself and locks, there are no loose palings or support members, and there are no gaps under or through the fence.

- **Ensure a current resuscitation poster is displayed on the inside of the pool fence.**
- **On rural properties, create a safe area away from water where you can supervise your child. Information about building a safe play area can be obtained from Farmsafe Australia [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au)**
- **Learn resuscitation. Enrol now.**
- **Check the fence on a regular basis, give yourself a reminder.**

**Fencing should completely isolate the water body on all sides, and a crucial part of fencing is ensuring the gate is self closing and self latching.**

**Fencing is an essential layer of defence in toddler drowning prevention. Fencing is a key component of the Royal Life Saving toddler drowning prevention campaign, Keep Watch.**

### Fencing CHECKLIST:

- The pool fence should fully isolate the pool from the house.*
- Ensure that a toddler cannot crawl under the gate or any other part of the fence.*
- The pool area should be able to be viewed from commonly used areas inside the house or garden.*
- Is the gate self-closing and self latching? (i.e. does the gate swing freely to the closed position when open and latch securely).*
- Is there anything near the pool fence (garden furniture, pot plants) that small children could use as a foothold to climb over the fence?*

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

**1300 RESQ ME**  
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