

What are the regulations regarding pool safety?

Very few respondents know of the legislation regarding privately owned swimming pools, according to a new survey conducted by pool cover specialists, Aqua-Net. The legislation was presented to parliament by the National Regulators for Compulsory Specifications (NCRS), an entity affiliated with the department of Trade and Industry. Alarming, the few residential pool owners who know about the legislation are not adhering to these crucial laws.



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While 44% of the respondents to the “Safe Summer Survey” - conducted during September and October of 2016 - knew of an incident where a minor has drowned in their family, social circle or neighbourhood, only 14% were aware of the laws concerning the ownership of residential pools.

According to Section D4 of the National Building Regulations, presented to parliament, the following rules must be met by owners of properties that have a swimming pool:

- The swimming pool should be enclosed by a fence, which prohibits direct access to the swimming pool. This ensures that no member of the public can gain access to a swimming pool from any street or public place or any adjoining site. Access should only be allowed through:
 - A fence with a self-closing and self-locking gate attached to it.
 - A wall or fence must be in place for the interconnected complex which contains a swimming pool.
 - The wall or fence enclosing the swimming pool must not be less than 1.2 m high, measured from the ground level.
 - It must not have an opening allowing the passage of a 100 mm diameter ball.
 - The constructional requirements of any steel fence or gate must comply with the requirements in SANS 1390.

According to the survey, only 42% of respondents had a pool fence.

“One of the aims of the survey was to understand how well parents and child-minders understood the safety measures that need to be in place when you have children that may have access to a residential pool. We were quite surprised by how many parents viewed safety devices such as inflatables as sufficient precaution against drowning. We were equally shocked that 15% of parents didn’t employ any kind of safety measure around the pool area,” says Andrew Reed, director of Aqua-Net.

When asked about which safety precautions are in place for the residential swimming pool they frequented most often, 37% of respondents stated that they relied solely on flotation devices such as water wings and inflatables to protect their children from drowning or near-drowning incidents. Only 20% of respondents confirmed that a pool cover is installed at the residential swimming pool they frequent most often, and a staggeringly low 2% confirmed that the residential swimming pool they frequent has an alarm system for pool perimeter installed.

“If you’re not able to install all of these layers of safety in one go – the most important investment to make would be a pool fence or safety net,” says Reed.

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