

## **SWIMMING POOLS, HOT TUBS/SPAS, AND BACK YARD LANDSCAPE PONDS**

Pools and spas are great for play, exercise, and therapy. However, an alarming number of water-related deaths and injuries occur in and around pools each year. Properly following building safety codes can help prevent such tragedies and ensure that family and friends have a safer, more enjoyable experience when using pools, spas, and hot tubs.

### **Required Permits**

The City of De Pere requires building permits for the installation of swimming pools, hot tubs, spas and back yard ponds as specified in Section 54-7 of the De Pere Municipal Code. The purpose is to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of both property owners and the surrounding neighborhood.

- Applications for permits shall include the location of the pool, hot tub, spa, or pond in relation to property lines, easements, and structures. Its proximity to overhead and underground electrical wiring shall also be included. **Note:** Overhead electrical wires shall be a **minimum** of ten (10) feet from the water's edge measured horizontally; underground electrical wires shall be a **minimum** of five (5) feet measured horizontally from the water's edge.
- Swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, and back yard ponds are required to be located only in a rear yard. Setbacks from property lines shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet.
- A minimum four (4) foot high fence shall completely enclose **all** pools, hot tubs, spas or back yard ponds. The fence shall be located a minimum of four (4) feet away from the water's edge and be constructed so as to prevent the penetration of an object greater than four (4) inches in diameter through or under the fence. Fences shall be able to withstand 200 pounds of force in any direction and shall be properly maintained. Fences with horizontal boards spaced more than one (1) inch apart are prohibited. Gates or doors opening through a fence enclosure shall be kept securely closed at all times while unattended and shall be equipped with a self-closing and self latching device designed to keep such gate or door securely closed.
- Portable pools (under 18" in depth) are exempt from fence protection but must be drained or covered in such a manner as to provide public safety when left unattended. **Note: Inflatable pools as shown in the picture below are required to be completely fenced.**



## **Statistics**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (Publication No. 359) reports the following study information:

- Each year, nationwide, about 300 children under 5 years old drown in swimming pools, usually owned by their family. In addition, more than 2,000 children in that age group are treated in hospital emergency rooms for submersion injuries.
- At the time of the incidents, most victims were being supervised by one or both parents. 46% of the victims were last seen in the house; 23% were last seen in the yard or on the porch or patio; and 31% were in or around the pool before the accident. In all, 69% of the children were not expected to be at or in the pool, yet were found in the water.
- Submersion incidents involving children usually happen in familiar surroundings.
- Pool submersions involving children happen quickly. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone. 77% of the victims had been missing from sight for 5 minutes or less. **Always look for a missing child in the pool first.**
- Survival depends on rescuing the child quickly and restarting the breathing process, even while the child is still in the water. Seconds count in preventing death or brain damage.
- Child drowning is a silent death. There's no splashing to alert anyone that the child is in trouble.

## **Door Alarms**

Install a door alarm. When the door or gate is opened, the alarm sounds and acts as an early warning device.

## **Pool Alarms**

Install a pool alarm to detect accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. While the alarm provides an immediate warning, it does not substitute for the fences, door alarms, and safety covers required by code.

## **Safety Gear**

Keep a phone within easy reach of the pool area for emergency calls. Post local emergency numbers in the pool area. Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. A pole, rope, and personal flotation devices are recommended.

## **Education**

Make sure at least one adult supervising activities around the pool has cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.

- Teach your children to swim.
- Post CPR instructions in the pool area.
- Post basic Rules for Pool Safety in a visible spot near the pool.
- For more educational activities for children, visit [www.poolkids.com](http://www.poolkids.com).

**Water Quality**

Clean and clear water is essential for safe pool, spa, and hot tub use. If you cannot see the bottom of the pool at its deepest point, the pool should not be used and you should contact your pool professional.

**Electricity**

There should be no electrical devices in the pool, spa, or hot tub area unless they are installed, maintained, and inspected by qualified professionals. Electrical devices also need to be protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

**Additional Safety Tips**

- Alert adult supervision of children is essential in pools, hot tubs, and spas at all times. There is no substitute for adult supervision to ensure child safety in the water.
- Assign an adult to watch the pool at all times when children are present, making sure there are no distractions such as talking with friends or cooking on a grill. The assigned adult must be watching the children at all times.
- Don't assume guests or their children can swim. Ask and observe.
- Don't leave toys in or around the pool area.
- Infants and small children should have constant supervision.
- Make sure all doors and gates leading to the pool or spa area are securely closed when the pool is not in use.
- Do not allow anyone impaired by alcohol or drugs to use the pool.

Please be safe. Contact the City of De Pere Building Inspection Department at 339-4053 if you have any questions.