



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

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SUBJECT:	Swimming Pool Barriers	DATE: 11/27/12
BULLETIN NO.	BC-2012-002	EFFECTIVE THE ABOVE DATE, ALL PREVIOUS POLICIES ON THIS SUBJECT ARE SUPERSEDED
FROM: MASSOUD ABOLHODA, BUILDING OFFICIAL		

To: B&S Supervisors, Plan check Staff

From: Massoud Abolhoda

Subject: Swimming Pool Barriers

Background: The purpose of this policy is to clarify and outline certain aspect of **Section 3109 of the California Building Code** in relation to Swimming Pool barriers.

The H&S Code, Section 115922 (a) states: "115922. (a) Commencing January 1, 2007, except as provided in Section 115925, whenever a building permit is issued for construction of a new swimming pool or spa, or any building permit is issued for remodeling of an existing pool or spa, at a private, single-family home, it shall be equipped with at least one of the following seven drowning prevention safety features;" the summary of items 1 to 3 and 6 and 7 options are as follows:

- 1-Pool Enclosure per section 1159253 (fence, doors and latches)
- 2-Approved removable pool fencing
- 3-Approved pool cover
- 6-Approved pool alarm, motion detector
- 7-Other approved means.

Item 4 and 5 are as follows:

- (4) The residence shall be equipped with exit alarms on those doors providing direct access to the pool.
- (5) All doors providing direct access from the home to the swimming pool shall be equipped with a self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism placed no lower than 54 inches above the floor.

Discussion: It is clear that when either items 4 or 5 are applied as standalone barriers they do not provide the higher degree of drowning protection as items 1 through 3 and 6. Further, items 1 through 3 and 6 provide barriers for children from the residence as well as those outside the residence. Applying item 4 alone does not provide sufficient protection for a child entering a yard from inside the dwelling. If a perimeter fence is not present, a child may find their way into a yard through the house front door or garage door.

The important aspect of this language is that it states "...at a private, single-family home, it shall be equipped with at least one of the following seven drowning prevention safety features". The language "at least one of the", implies that some of the listed items are meant to be applied with other items to provide the intended protection.

Policy: It is the Building Official's interpretation that an exit alarm (item 4) and self-closing, self-latching devices (item 5) as listed in 3109.4.4.2 of the 2010 California Building Code do not meet the intent of the code as standalone drowning prevention. Item 4 and/or item 5 of the seven items in the section can be used in conjunction with exterior building wall and in combination with the perimeter fencing to provide complete enclosure as intended by the code. Also, item 4 and 5 may on special cases be used as standalone prevention with prior approval of the Building Official. For example, when Natural barrier and Topography (as defined in section 305.6 and 305.7 of International Swimming Pool and Spa code published by International Code) provides equivalent barrier intended with Pool Enclosure (item 1) requirement of perimeter fencing maybe waived.