

*Model Barrier Code for  
Residential Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs*

ANSI/NSPI-8 1996



*Approved December 19, 1995 by the  
American National Standards Institute*

**AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD FOR MODEL BARRIER CODE FOR RESIDENTIAL  
SWIMMING POOLS, SPAS AND HOT TUBS**

**SPONSOR:**

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**Approved December 19, 1995  
by the  
American National Standards Institute, Inc.**

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## FOREWORD

(This Foreword is not part of the American National Standard ANSI/NSPI-8 1996)

The objective of this standard is to provide recommended minimum guidelines to assist local jurisdictions and other regulatory bodies, where necessary, in the development and promulgation of criteria for model barrier codes.

The design requirements and construction practices in this standard are based upon sound engineering principles, research and field experience which, when applied properly, contribute to the delivery, installation, and safe use of the pool/spa product.

The words safe and safety are not absolutes. While the goal of this standard is to design and construct a safe, enjoyable product, it is recognized that risk factors cannot, as a practical matter, be reduced to zero in any human activity. This standard does not replace good judgment and personal responsibility.

As with any product, the specific recommendations for installation and use provided by the manufacturer should be carefully observed.

This standard was prepared by the Model Barrier Code Committee of the National Spa and Pool Institute (NSPI) in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Procedures for the Development and Coordination of American National Standards utilizing the ANSI accredited canvass method. Consensus approval was achieved by public review and ballot of the ANSI accredited canvass list.

The consensus committee that approved this standard was balanced to ensure that individuals from competent and concerned interests have had an opportunity to participate. The proposed standard was made available for public review and comment which provides an opportunity for additional public input from industry, academia, safety experts, regulatory agencies, public health authorities and the public-at-large.

The following organizations, recognized as having an interest in the standardization of model barrier code requirements for pools/spas were contacted prior to the approval of this standard. Inclusion in this list does not necessarily imply that the organization concurred with the submittal of the proposed standard to ANSI.

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Suggestions for improvement of this standard should be sent to the National Spa and Pool Institute, 2111 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attention: Technical Department.

*ANSI/NSPI-8 1996*

In accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) procedures, this document will be reviewed periodically. The National Spa and Pool Institute welcomes your comments and suggestions, and continues to review all NSPI standards, which include:

ANSI/NSPI-1 1991 Standard For Public Swimming Pools  
ANSI/NSPI-2 1992 Standard For Public Spas  
ANSI/NSPI-3 1992 Standard For Permanently Installed Residential Spas  
ANSI/NSPI-4 1992 Standard For Aboveground/Onground Residential Swimming Pools  
ANSI/NSPI-5 1995 Standard For Residential Inground Swimming Pools  
ANSI/NSPI-6 1992 Standard For Residential Portable Spas  
NSPI-7 Workmanship Standards For Swimming Pools and Spas  
ANSI/NSPI-8 1996 Model Barrier Code for Residential Swimming Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs

***Special thanks to the following whose contributions and dedication made this standard possible:***

Joe Schmerler, J.S. Associates, Inc.  
Don Aymes, Aquasports/Seasonmaster, Inc.  
Laurie Batter, Batter Up! Productions  
Bob Besser, Teledyne Laars  
Don Burns, SPEC  
Joel Caesar, NSPI, Region I  
Bill Kent, Horner Equipment of Florida, Inc.  
John Puetz, Laporte Water Technologies  
Bud Weisbrod, Aquatech Corporation  
Gene Wells, Aquarius Pools, Inc.  
Lee West, Balboa Instruments, Inc.

**Table of Contents**

	Page
Scope/Purpose .....	1
Section I: Layers of Protection .....	1
Section II: Adult Supervision .....	1
Section III: Supplemental Layers of Protection .....	2
1. Walls, Fences and Structures as Barriers .....	2
1.1 Dimension	
1.2 Chain-link fence	
1.3 Picket/Ornamental fence	
1.4 Pedestrian access gates	
1.4.1 Chain-link access gate	
1.4.2 Picket/Ornamental access gate	
1.5 Other access gates	
2. Pool Wall as Barrier for Aboveground/Onground Pools .....	3
2.1 Pool wall	
2.2 Ladders or Steps	
2.3 Fence rail mounted on top of forty-eight (48") aboveground/onground pool wall structure	
2.3.1 Picket/Ornamental-type fence	
2.4 Deck	
3. Wall of Building with 3-sided Fencing as a Barrier .....	4
3.1 Doors	
3.2 Windows	
4. Safety Cover for Spas/Hot Tubs as a Barrier .....	5
5. Automatic Power Safety Cover for Swimming Pools as a Barrier .....	5
6. Natural Topography as a Barrier .....	5
7. Screen Enclosure as a Barrier .....	5
8. Other Layers of Protection as a Barrier .....	5
9. Clear Zone .....	5
Section IV: Supplemental Layers of Protection -- Indoor Swimming Pools, Spas, or Hot Tubs .....	5
Definitions .....	5
Appendix A .....	7



**Preamble to NSPI Model Child Protection/Barrier Code**

Protecting young children from accidental drownings and near-drownings in all aquatic environments, whether natural or constructed, is a primary concern of parents, the aquatic industry, health and safety organizations and regulatory groups.

To this end, organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Drowning Prevention Foundation, Think First, the National Spa and Pool Institute (NSPI), the Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission CPSC), the Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics, the YMCA of the United States, the National Rehabilitation Hospital, the National Swimming Pool Safety Committee, the Tucson Drowning Prevention Committee and the National Swimming Pool Foundation, recognize that constant adult supervision is the primary element in an integrated approach to drowning prevention.

While supervision is the key to accomplishing the objective of reducing the number of submersion incidents, it is well known that, at times, children may do the unexpected, catching their supervisors off guard. But being caught off guard does not have to mean being unprepared. For those instances when the unexpected does occur and there may be a lapse in supervision, the NSPI has developed the Model Child Protection/Barrier Code. This Model Code establishes layers of protection to supplement and complement the requirement for adult supervision of young children around aquatic environments.

This is a multipurpose document, intended to meet the needs of code groups, local governments or building departments, where necessary, in the development and promulgation of barrier criteria for residential swimming pools, spas and hot tubs. It is understood that for the sake of enforceability and application, the style and format of this standard may need to be revised to meet the code-writing requirements of the jurisdiction having authority.

The specific engineering parameters are to be used for building code implementation. The strategy parameters are to be used for local ordinances. Note that in a study of drowning and near-drowning incidents, CPSC found that the majority of the victims lived in or were visiting the residence where the accident happened; less than two percent (2%) of the accidents occurred when a child trespassed on the property. Most of the victims were either near or in the residence immediately prior to the accident and reached the pool unnoticed.

The key purpose of this code is to assist the owner/supervising adult to avoid a pool/spa related accident. Various options are designed to deny, delay or detect unsupervised entry to the pool/spa area. The ultimate responsibility for avoiding accidents as well as maintaining the integrity of all layers of protection lies with the property owner or adult supervisor.

## **MODEL BARRIER CODE FOR RESIDENTIAL SWIMMING POOLS, SPAS AND HOT TUBS**

### **SCOPE**

These requirements establish layers of protection for young children against the potential for drowning and near drowning in residential swimming pools, spas and hot tubs by limiting or delaying their access to swimming pools, spas, and hot tubs.

### **PURPOSE**

The objective of these requirements is to establish provisions that address supervision, the foremost deterrent to a young child's access to a pool, spa or hot tub and to potential accidental drowning, both at times when a pool, spa or hot tub is in use, and at times when it is not in use.

Additionally, in the event of a lapse in adult supervision, and particularly for the protection of children in the most at-risk age group, less than five (5) years of age, who cannot yet appreciate or be instructed as to the risk of drowning, supplemental layers of protection are established. They limit or delay child access to an outdoor or an indoor pool, spa or hot tub from the surrounding area and to an outdoor or an indoor pool, spa or hot tub from within a building or dwelling where walls of the building or dwelling are the barrier, or part of the barrier, to the pool, spa or hot tub.

### **SECTION I - LAYERS OF PROTECTION**

Every person in possession of land as owner, purchaser under contract, lessee, tenant or licensee, upon which a residential swimming pool, spa or hot tub is installed on or after the effective date of this Code shall:

- a. At all times maintain, or cause to be maintained, on said land and at said pool, spa or hot tub, constant adult supervision of children when children are known to be present on said land or at said pool, spa or hot tub. And,
- b. Provide a means of permanent perimeter protection such as, but not limited to fencing, stand-alone walls or building walls (that shall not contain indentations or protrusions except for normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints), screen enclosures or combinations of means including natural topography, shoreline of navigable sea, river or lake, cliffs, etc., or safety covers complying with ASTM F1346 1991<sup>1</sup>, an alarm, or other approved safeguard to limit or delay access of children to the pool, spa or hot tub. And,
- c. Where a building or dwelling wall serves as a barrier, or part of a barrier to a pool, spa or hot tub, provide means

of protection to limit or delay access to the pool, spa or hot tub through doors or windows in the building/dwelling wall which provisions may, at the option of the local authority, be limited to dwellings where children less than five (5) years of age are permanent residents in the home.

### **SECTION II - ADULT SUPERVISION**

Adult supervision of children at a residential swimming pool, spa or hot tub, or on said land where a residential swimming pool, spa or hot tub is installed shall be in accordance with all of the following provisions:

- a. A person of reasonable intelligence and ability, at least eighteen (18) years of age, or, if less than eighteen (18) years old, with training in supervision such as Red Cross Life Guard certification.
- b. A person supervising children at a swimming pool that is deeper than four feet (4') (1.2m) shall be proficient in swimming.
- c. A person who shall be in the immediate vicinity of the pool, so that at all times the person shall have visual contact with the pool and/or the child/children he/she supervises and whose sole purpose at the pool, spa or hot tub is supervision and who shall not engage in physical activities not related to supervision.

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<sup>1</sup> ASTM F 1346 1991, Performance Specification for Safety Covers and Labeling Requirements for all Covers for Swimming Pools, Spas, and Hot Tubs. (To order copies of this Standard, contact: ASTM 100 Barr Harbor Dr. West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959. Phone: 610-832-9585)