I have purchased an above ground swimming pool. Are there any safety requirements I should be aware of before using it?

With warm summer days many people purchase a temporary *swimming pool* to obtain refreshing relief from the heat. Although the use of *swimming pools* is a wonderful way to enjoy the summer season caution needs to be exercised to prevent particularly small children from a disastrous encounter with a *swimming pool*. The Alberta Building Code (ABC) has specific safety requirements governing *swimming pools* and the placement of *swimming pools* to protect you, and neighboring children who may be tempted to use your pool without you knowing it. Without supervision a child can easily drown in a *swimming pool*.

Swimming pools come in basically three styles: in-ground, above-ground and on-ground types (hot tubs and spas are viewed as special purpose pools and have similar requirements to protect people from drowning, see STANDATA 06-BCV-006.)

If the privately-owned pool has a water design depth greater than 600 mm (regardless of the pool's surface area and regardless of whether the pool has a water circulation system), then the pool is classified as a *private swimming pool* for ABC purposes. Fence and gate requirements will then apply. These requirements are applicable even if the private swimming pool is an on-ground swimming pool.

The 2006 Alberta Building Code (ABC) Division "B" states the following for *private swimming pools* and for their required protection:

7.3.2.3. Fence and Gate Design and Construction

1) The entire area of an outdoor swimming pool shall be protected by a fence, building wall or enclosure that can prevent access by unauthorized persons and its height above the outside ground level shall not be less than

a) 1.8 m for a *private swimming pool*, and
b) 2.0 m for all other *swimming pools*.

2) An opening for access through a fence around a *swimming pool* or a *private swimming pool* shall be protected by a gate that is

a) the same height as the fence,
b) equipped with a self-closing device,
c) equipped with a self-latching device on the inside of the gate located not less than 1.5 m above the ground level, and
d) capable of being locked.

3) The fence and gate around a *swimming pool* or a *private swimming pool* shall be constructed so that all horizontal and diagonal members are located on the *swimming pool* side.

4) Barbed wire shall not be used on or as a fence or gate around a *swimming pool* or *private swimming pool*.

5) No device shall be installed on or adjacent to a fence or gate around a *swimming pool* or a *private swimming pool* that could cause an electric current to pass through the fence or gate.

…/2

6) A fence is not required around any portion of an outdoor *private swimming pool* where the top of the outside wall of the *private swimming pool* is not less than 1.8 m above the level of the ground outside the wall and the wall is constructed so that the only means of access to the *private swimming pool* is through a gate or similar facility.

Alberta Building Code 2006 Division “A” Definition:
Swimming pool means a structure, basin or tank containing an artificially created pool of water that is greater than 600 mm in depth at any point and is used for swimming, recreation, bathing, diving, wading, healing or therapy, religious rituals or other purposes, and includes all buildings, equipment and facilities used in connection with it.

Always contact the local authority having jurisdiction prior to any construction activity and ensure your project complies with Alberta Safety Codes and local bylaws. Local authority and permit information may be accessed on our website at Permit Information.

If you require further information please contact Safety Services at:

Telephone: 1-866-421-6929
Email: safety.services@gov.ab.ca

www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca