

Do-it-yourself pool fence



Pool fence comes in a variety of material types, styles and colors to suit the taste of virtually every pool owner and installation can be accomplished with a few basic skills. Fencing is usually the last step of the in ground pool installation process but without a doubt it is one of the most important as far as safety goes. The average pool enclosure is about 150 to 180 linear feet and installed costs range from 35 to 45 dollars per foot making a do-it-yourself installation very attractive. Today, the most popular do-it-yourself pool fence material choice is ornamental aluminum and it's no coincidence that it is also the fastest growing segment of the retail fence market. Aluminum pool fence sections come either disassembled or fully assembled and ready to install. Aside from the frustration of putting together twenty or more sections, there's the very real potential to scratch the power coat finish so most do-it-yourself installers elect to have the pool fence sections delivered 'fully assembled'.

If your pool is still being installed and you're just starting to research pool fence panels, now is a good time to photograph the feed and return filter lines as well as the electric that is to be buried. Be sure to get enough of the area into the photograph so there are reference points to locate where the lines are once they are covered. Pictures will be incredibly useful later on when it's time to install the fence as they can help you to avoid damage. Likewise, once you've decided on the layout of the fence it's important to measure from the edge of the in ground pool or the patio/deck and note other permanent fixtures on a site plan that you can use as you install. If purchased on the internet, pool fence can take several weeks to be shipped and you will want to have an accurate record of where the measurements were taken to be sure there are enough pool fence panels to complete the enclosure as originally planned.

When your material does arrive, comprehensive do-it-yourself installation instructions should be included but that's not always the case. When the do-it yourself pool fence installer shops on the internet some important aspects of the project can be omitted by the supplier and it may seem like the posts and sections just throw themselves together. Regrettably, there is some actual work involved. For installation longevity in areas of the country where the ground freezes, it is favorable to provide a deep enough footing to guard against heaving. In some places this can mean a 4 foot deep hole. Many manufacturers do not offer specific do-it-yourself instructions and instead rely on the professional installer to know proper methodology which includes among other things, post drainage. It's a good idea to ask if the company you're planning on buying material from offers step by step instruction guides, has any personal experience with the product and if someone will be available to answer questions if you should run into difficulty.

A key point of consideration for do-it-yourself pool fence installers is with local pool enclosure codes. While most states use the BOCA pool code as the model for their barrier regulations, it is important to know that local governments can make standards more restrictive. If you are going to do it yourself, it is imperative that you study the requirements and understand what they mean. For instance, the BOCA code (Building Officials and Code Administrators) says "Where the release mechanism of the self-latching device is less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate". It then goes on to specify what must be done to make that latch secure. This area is frequently misinterpreted as 54 inches from the ground but measurement from the bottom of the gate is an important distinction. Another area of confusion is the distance allowed from the bottom rail to the grade. The CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) suggests a clearance of less than four inches while the BOCA code states; "The maximum vertical clearance between finished ground level and the barrier shall be 2 inches measured on the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool". If the people you're buying your do-it-yourself pool fence from do not provide accurate information, maybe you should look elsewhere. While these may seem like minor points, backyards in ground swimming pool drowning statistics are quite sobering.

Backyard In Ground Swimming Pool Statistics

- Three-quarters of children involved in pool submersion or drowning accidents were between 1 and 3 years old. Boys between 1 and 3 years old were the most likely victims of fatal drowning or near-fatal submersions in residential swimming pools.
- Eighty percent of child deaths and more than 60% of injuries occur at a residence. Home pools are the most common drowning site for children under age 5, with 65% of the accidents in a pool owned by the victim's immediate family, and 33% in pools owned by relatives or friends. **Less than 2% are a result of a child trespassing** on property where they don't live or belong.
- More than 75% of the victims had been out of sight for five minutes or less, and were being supervised by one or both parents at the time. Almost half of the incidents are attributed to an adult losing contact or knowledge of the whereabouts of the child, and the child accessing the pool during this time period.
- Most children who drown in home pools enter the water without their parent's or caregiver's knowledge. Nearly 70% of children who drowned in home pools were not expected to be in or around the pool, but were found in the water.
- Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home before the pool accident occurred. About a quarter of the victims were last seen on the porch or patio or in the yard. Sixteen percent resulted from barrier compromise or circumvention, and 11% of incidents occurred after the victim was last seen in or near the pool.
- In-ground pools account for the largest percentage (49%) of home pool accident sites, followed by above-ground pools and portable pools.

Isolation fencing is the preferred installation because it provides an additional layer of protection. Isolation fencing is defined as "fencing that completely separates the pool or spa area from the house or other structures. It restricts unauthorized access from neighbors' yards, other nearby buildings, and from inside the house. Isolation fencing is the preferred configuration for pool and spa protection". The National Drowning Prevention Alliance (NDPA) recommends a five foot tall barrier and that it is of the isolation type. Most areas of the United States still allow a portion of the house to comprise part of the pool barrier but certain precautions are required. As with the pool fence gate, the door providing access to the pool area must open "away from the pool". Section 9.2 of the BOCA Code reads in part "All doors with direct access to the pool through that wall shall be equipped with an alarm which produces an audible warning when the door and its screen, if present, are opened. The audible warning shall commence not more than 7 seconds after the door and door screen, if present, are opened and shall sound continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds. The alarm shall have a minimum sound pressure rating of 85 DbA at 10 feet and the sound of the alarm shall be distinctive from other household sounds such as smoke alarms, telephones, and doorbells". Additionally, alarms that detect motion of the water and retractable pool covers may be mandatory in your area.

Very frequently installation of the actual in ground pool itself goes over budget. New pool owners can realize significant savings when opting for a do-it-yourself pool fence installation. Some may even find it very satisfying. Not only is there value in the 'sweat equity', but if time is taken to properly plan and carefully install the barrier to the local standards, the fence will be esthetically pleasing and provide safety for years to come.

[The BOCA Code](#)

[NDPA Layers of protection](#)

[The Safety Turtle Wrist Band](#)

[Learn more about Drowning Prevention!](#)

[Be aware of the dangers of portable pools](#)

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