

FACTSHEET



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Inflatable or Portable Swimming Pools

What is an inflatable or portable swimming pool?

Inflatable or portable pools are pools which can be inflated or easily assembled, and are not permanent. Australian Consumer Law (ACL) defines portable swimming pools as a pool that is for personal use and includes inflatable pools of any depth, soft-sided pools of any depth, and rigid-sided swimming pools with a depth of less than 30cm of water.¹

How many children be injured when using an inflatable or portable swimming pool?

Drowning:

- Toddlers can drown in as little as 5cm of water. Pools left unattended or unfenced are a potential drowning hazard.
- Children may drown in small amounts of water from rain or sprinklers collected in inflatable or portable pools.

Electrocution:

- Electrical pumps and filter systems for portable swimming pools may cause electrocution if not used properly.²

Infection:

- Children can become ill when pool water is not emptied and if it is not properly treated. Bacteria and viruses thrive in the warm, shallow water.²

How common are these injuries?

Children aged less than five years of age have the highest drowning death rate of any age group.³ In 2013-14, 67% of all child drowning were in private swimming pools. From 2007-2014, 17% of private pool drowning among children occurred in portable or inflatable pools.⁴

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for inflatable or portable swimming pools?

According to the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* (NSW), all pools that can be filled with more than 30cm of water must have a fence around them. Fences around pools must be designed, constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with the Australian Standard (AS 1926.1-2007: Swimming pool safety).⁵

All portable and inflatable pools must have warning labels with information about the importance of supervision, maintaining clean pool water and storing away the pool when not in use. Portable and inflatable pools that can be filled with more than 30cm of water must also include a warning label about mandatory fencing requirements.⁵

The law also states that owners of a property with a swimming pool that is able to be filled with more than 30cm of water should:

- Maintain child-resistant barriers (e.g. pool fencing) so they are effective
- Ensure all doors and gates providing access to the swimming pool are kept securely closed at all times
- Ensure that at all times a CPR sign is displayed in the area near the pool and can be seen from a distance of

three meters. This sign should be clearly visible and contain approved resuscitation techniques.²

Example of a compliant portable pool and barrier



Example of emptying and storing away a small inflatable pool after use



Visit the inflatable and portable pool section of the Kids Health website for more information and resources:
<https://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/inflatable-and-portable-pools>

Remember:

- Fines apply if you do not have a four sided fence around any pool that can be filled with more than 30cm of water (the size of an average ruler).
- Only use large inflatable or portable pools if they are able to be fenced.
- Always empty the pool and store smaller pools upright away from young children when it is not in use.
- Always read the labels on inflatable and portable swimming pools. Warning information will vary depending on if the height of the pool is less than 30cm or above 30cm.
- If using an electric pump, fit a Safety Switch to the house where the pool will be used. Check that the pump and filter have an electrical safety approval number or Regulatory Compliance Mark.
- Ask an electrician to install a suitable electrical power point near the pool so you don't have to use extension cords.
- Display a warning sign with approved resuscitation techniques.
- Always supervise children from within arm's reach when they are in and around the water.
- Older siblings should not be relied upon to supervise younger children.
- Learn infant and child Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Familiarise your children with water and teach them to swim, but never assume that they are not likely to drown.
- Ensure the water is kept clean.

References:

1. Australian Consumer Law (ACL). (2013) *Consumer Goods (Portable Swimming Pools) Safety Standard*. Retrieved from ACL website: <https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00049>
2. The Department of Local Government (DLG). (2008) *Review of the Swimming Pools Act 1992*. Retrieved from the DLG website: <http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/Information/Swimming%20Pools%20Act%201992%20Review%20-%20Report.pdf>.
3. Royal Life Saving Society Australia. National Drowning Report 2015. *Royal Life Saving Society Australia*. [Online] 2014. [Cited: November 1, 2015.]
4. NSW Child Death Review Team. Child Deaths: Drowning deaths of children (private swimming pools) 2007-2014. NSW Ombudsman. [Online] Sept 2015. http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/27667/Drowning-deaths-of-children-private-swimming-pools-20072014.pdf
5. Product Safety Australia. (2013) *Swimming Pools (Portable)* Retrieved from: <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/998352>.