

Pool Safety Checklist

(Use for homes, HOAs, hotels, gyms, and public facilities. Mark ✓/X/N/A. Items use plain, measurable criteria where possible.)

1) Physical Barriers & Gates

- ☐ Four-sided isolation barrier fully surrounds pool/spa (no direct house access without an alarmed door). Min height ≥ 48 in / 1.2 m.
- ☐ Clear zone on the outside: ≥ 36 in / 0.9 m free of climbable objects (furniture, trees, planters, rails).
- ☐ Openings/gaps in fence < 4 in / 100 mm; no footholds/ornamental rails that enable climbing.
- ☐ Gates self-closing & self-latching; swing outward from water. Latch ≥ 54 in (1.37 m) above grade or otherwise child-resistant.
- ☐ Hinges/springs auto-close from fully open and just-ajar; gate latches reliably without manual assist.
- ☐ Doors/windows from buildings opening to pool area are alarmed or protected by secondary barriers.
- ☐ Special areas (wading/children's pools) separated from main pool by barrier ≥ 48 in.

For facilities (public/hotel/HOA)

- ☐ Turnstiles/side gates meet the same latch and height specs; no propped-open gates.
- ☐ After-hours security in place (locks, access control).

• Local building codes may have different height, latch, or clearance requirements. Always confirm with your county or city pool barrier code before installation.

2) Supervision, Rules & User Behavior

- ☐ Active supervision: a designated Water Watcher on duty; no phone distraction.
- ☐ Children & weak swimmers within arm's reach; U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets available; toys are not flotation.
- ☐ Buddy system for older swimmers; no solo swimming.
- ☐ Alcohol/drug policy enforced; no impaired swimming.
- ☐ Running, pushing, dunking, diving in shallow water prohibited.
- ☐ Swimming lessons & CPR encouraged for households; staff trained (facilities).
- ☐ Lifeguard provided or "No Lifeguard on Duty – Swim at Your Own Risk" signage posted (facilities).

• Supervision and signage rules differ by pool classification and local ordinances. Always check your local pool safety posting requirements.

3) Alarms, Covers & Additional Layers

- ☐ Door/window/house alarms audible (≥ 85 dB), armed, and tested.
- ☐ Surface/subsurface pool alarm installed (if used) and tested per manufacturer.
- ☐ Safety cover (nets/mesh/solid) in good condition; anchors intact; tension correct; complies with ASTM F1346 (where applicable).
- ☐ Spa/Hot tub cover lockable and latched when not in use.

• Alarm and safety cover requirements vary by state and by whether the pool is public or private. Verify compliance with your local building or health department.

4) Entrapment & Circulation (VGB/Equipment Room)

- ☐ Main drain covers present, undamaged, securely fastened, VGB-compliant and within service life date.
- ☐ Dual drains or approved SVRS/Vacuum Release or other engineered anti-entrapment system installed and functional.
- ☐ Suction/return fittings intact; no missing grates or broken screws.
- ☐ Skimmer lids secure; baskets in place; gutters/grates free of cracks.
- ☐ Flow/pressure within manufacturer/permit range; gauges readable and working.
- ☐ Backwash & waste lines discharge legally; valves labeled.

• Public pools are federally required to comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act. Residential pools should still follow these standards for safety.

5) Water Quality & Clarity

- ☐ Main drain visible from deck at deepest point (no cloudy water).
- ☐ Disinfectant within target range (typical references: free chlorine 1–3 ppm pools; 3–5 ppm spas, or per local code).
- ☐ pH 7.2–7.8 (or per local code); ORP/automation operational (if installed).
- ☐ Cyanuric acid and combined chlorine kept within local limits; records available.
- ☐ Daily testing recorded (time, readings, actions).
- ☐ Water temperature documented for spas; high-temp cut-off works.

• Local public health departments may set specific limits for disinfectant and pH levels. Follow the standards adopted in your jurisdiction.

6) Deck, Ladders & Pool Interior

- ☐ Decking is clean, non-slip, free of trip hazards, and drains away from pool.
- ☐ Ladders/steps/handrails tight, corrosion-free; treads non-slip. Lifts/ramps operational where required for accessibility.
- ☐ Pool shell/tiles intact (no sharp edges); depth markers correct and legible (public).
- ☐ "NO DIVING" markers where depth is below local dive standard (often < 5 ft / 1.5 m).
- ☐ Lighting (underwater/deck) functional and GFCI-protected.

• Deck and surface standards vary by local code and pool classification (public vs. residential). Check local inspection requirements.

7) Rescue & Emergency Equipment

- ☐ Rescue pole (shepherd's crook) reachable and in good repair.
- ☐ Ring buoy/throw line with sufficient rope length to span pool's width.
- ☐ First-aid kit fully stocked; contents sealed/dated; location labeled.
- ☐ AED available, pads in date, staff trained (recommended for facilities).
- ☐ Emergency phone or reliable cell with posted address and emergency numbers poolside.
- ☐ Emergency action plan (EAP) posted; staff/household knows roles.

• Requirements for rescue gear differ between public, semi-public, and residential pools. Consult your state's health code for minimum specifications.

8) Chemical Storage & Mechanical Room

- ☐ Chemicals stored locked, upright, ventilated, dry; original labels/SDS on site.
- ☐ Incompatible chemicals segregated (chlorine separate from acids/ammonia/organics).
- ☐ Feeders/automation labeled, leak-free, with backflow protection.
- ☐ Personal protective equipment (PPE) available (gloves, goggles, apron, mask as required).
- ☐ Spill kit & eyewash available and accessible.
- ☐ Secondary containment and ventilation working (for liquid feed rooms).
- ☐ Electrical panels clear (≥ 36 in) and dry; pump room lighting adequate.

• Chemical storage, labeling, and PPE standards may be governed by OSHA, NFPA, or local fire authorities. Follow applicable regulations for your state.

9) Signage & Public-Facing Information

(Facilities/Hotels/HOAs)

- ☐ Hours, capacity, rules, and bather load posted at entrance.
- ☐ Depth markers and “No Diving” legends placed per code.
- ☐ Chemical hazard signage and pump room access restricted to staff.
- ☐ Address/location and 911 instructions clearly displayed.
- ☐ Accessibility info (pool lift use) posted.

• *Local or state pool codes may prescribe exact wording, letter height, and sign placement. Verify before posting.*

10) Electrical & Bonding

- ☐ All receptacles within 20 ft of water are GFCI protected and covered.
- ☐ Bonding/grounding in place for pumps, heaters, rails, and metallic parts.
- ☐ Underwater lights intact; cords/fixtures undamaged; no water intrusion.
- ☐ No extension cords used for permanent equipment.

• *Electrical and bonding standards follow the NEC but may include local amendments. Always confirm through a licensed electrician or building official.*

11) Operations, Records & Training

(Facilities/HOAs; optional for homes)

- ☐ Daily logs of chemistry, temperature, and incidents maintained and reviewed.
- ☐ Permits, inspections, and certifications current and posted.
- ☐ Staff training (lifeguard, first-aid/CPR/AED, chemical handling) up to date.
- ☐ Contractor service records (filters, heaters, lift maintenance) on file.
- ☐ Incident/near-miss reports completed and corrective actions tracked.

• *Public pools must meet recordkeeping and training rules defined by state or county health departments. Residential pool owners should still keep logs as best practice.*

12) End-of-Use / Daily Close-Down

- ☐ Pick up toys/floats so kids aren't tempted to reach in.
- ☐ Lock gates & engage covers (as applicable).
- ☐ Verify alarms armed, phone charged, rescue gear back in place.
- ☐ Quick visual check of water clarity and equipment noise/leaks.

13) Special Features & Seasonal/Weather

- ☐ Slides/diving boards meet manufacturer and local clearance/depth specs; hardware tight; signs posted.
- ☐ Water features (play structures, splash pads, lazy rivers) have separate controls and safe flow/chemical management.
- ☐

Storm readiness: close pool during lightning/thunder; secure furniture; verify power loss procedures.

Off-season: safety cover installed, water treated, gates locked, alarms active.

- *Check manufacturer specifications and local ordinances for minimum clearances, depths, and signage related to diving boards or slides.*

This checklist combines national best-practice standards for residential and public pool safety, drawing from the CDC, CPSC, and ASTM guidelines. It is designed to help homeowners, property managers, and inspectors identify potential hazards and maintain safe pool environments.

⚠ Important: *This checklist reflects national best practices and model safety standards (including CDC, CPSC, ASTM, and NEC guidance). Local building codes and state health regulations may differ. Always confirm compliance with your city, county, or state authority before construction, renovation, or inspection.*

Legal Disclaimer: *This checklist is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional inspection, legal interpretation, or engineering advice.*

Following this checklist does not guarantee full compliance with state or local codes. Users are responsible for verifying all applicable requirements with their city, county, or state pool safety regulations.

Helpful Resources

- [PoolSafely.gov](https://www.poolsafely.gov) – National Pool Safety Campaign
- [CDC – Healthy Swimming Program](https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-swimming)
- [ASTM International – Pool Safety Standards](https://www.astm.org/pool-safety)

Safety starts with awareness — check your pool regularly, update your safety gear, and always keep a watchful eye. Drowning is fast and silent, but prevention is simple.

For detailed pool safety laws in your state, visit poolguardusa.com

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