



# Requirements for Outdoor Residential Swimming Pools



## Your guide to the permit and inspection process

Chesterfield County, Virginia  
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Community through Excellence  
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## When is a permit required?

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code requires a building permit for any swimming pool that is larger than 150 square feet in surface area, holds over 5,000 gallons of water, or is 24 inches or more in depth. The code makes no distinction between in-ground, above-ground, inflatable pools, or swim spas. Hot tubs require no building permit, but an electrical permit is required. (The hot tub barrier will be inspected during the electrical inspection).



YES



Electrical Permit Only



YES



YES



## What is the process?

1. If applicable, check with your homeowners association to verify if a pool is permitted in your community.
2. Gather all of the necessary documents.
3. Submit the required permit applications.
4. Pay the required fees.
5. Wait for the permit to be issued.
6. Construct the pool and barrier including any required electrical installations.
7. Call for the required inspections prior to concealing work.

## What documents do I need?

Two documents must accompany your permit application:

1. **Plot plan** — showing the proposed distances from the pool to all property lines and the house. It is required to show compliance with the Planning Department's setback requirements. A survey plat with the pool location or a hand sketch showing the pool location with respect to the property lines and house is acceptable.
2. **Construction drawings** — two sets are required. Drawings for in-ground pools must include wall sections with size and spacing of reinforcing steel and be sealed by a Virginia registered design professional. Drawings for above-ground pools must include copies of the assembly instructions.

## Can I apply online?

From the comfort of your home or office you can now apply for online! Simply follow the link, log-in to your account, and follow the steps to apply online.

<https://aca-prod.accela.com/CHESTERFIELD/>



## What permits do I need?

The following permits are required:

1. Pool permit
2. Barrier permit (may be included with the pool permit if obtained together)
3. Electrical permit
4. Gas permit (if the pool, hot tub or spa will be heated by gas)

Notes:

- ✓ Existing barriers and electrical equipment will be required to be code compliant. If they are not, a permit will be required to bring them into compliance.
- ✓ Be sure to check with the Planning Department (748-1050) for setback and easement requirements for your property.

## Who should apply for the permit?

Applying for a permit is an important decision because the permit holder(s) bears the ultimate responsibility that the work will comply with the code.

- ✓ For in-ground pools, we recommend the licensed pool contractor obtain the **pool permit**, but the homeowner may do so.
- ✓ For above-ground pools, the homeowner usually obtains the permit, unless a contractor is hired, who should then obtain the permit.
- ✓ The **barrier permit** is usually obtained by the homeowner, but a contractor may obtain it.
- ✓ The homeowner is encouraged to have a licensed electrical and, if applicable, gas contractor apply for the **electrical and gas permits**, however, the homeowner may do so.

When a homeowner is applying for any of these permits, the homeowner must review the code requirements fact sheet. The final inspection for the swimming pool and barrier permit will not be approved until the work for permits is completed.



## What are the fees for the permits?

Information concerning fees is available on our Web site [www.chesterfield.gov/bi](http://www.chesterfield.gov/bi) or by calling the Building Inspection Department and is subject to annual change.

## How long does it take to get the permit?

By logging into the county's Web page or your ELM account, and entering the permit number, you can find the status of your permit application. When your construction documents are in order and you have received approval from all of the departments, a building permit and one set of *Approved Field Plans* will be mailed to you, uploaded into the ELM system, or you may pick them up at the Building Inspection Department depending on the option you selected upon application.



## What are the barrier requirements?

Outdoor swimming pools are required to have a barrier around them that complies with, but is not limited to, these general provisions (see the actual code for the definitive provisions):

- **Minimum height:**
  - ✓ 48 inches above grade measured from the outside face of the barrier.
  - ✓ For above-ground pools, the side of the pool may qualify as the barrier if the pool is 48 inches tall, or the barrier may mount on top of the pool structure. In each case, the ladder must be removable when not in use or have a gate that meets requirements listed under "Access Gates".



- **Maximum opening size:**
  - ✓ 2 inches between grade and bottom of barrier
  - ✓ 4 inches between top of above-ground pool wall and bottom of barrier when barrier is attached to the top of pool wall.
  - ✓ All other openings shall not allow the passage of a 4-inch diameter sphere.
  - ✓ A powered safety cover, which complies with ASTM-1346 may be used in lieu of a fence style barrier
- **Climbability:**
  - ✓ Solid barriers (stone walls, etc.) must have no protrusions or indentations.
  - ✓ Horizontal members less than 45 inches apart must be located on the inside face of the barrier. In such cases, the space between corresponding vertical members must be 1.75 inches or less.
  - ✓ Chain-link or lattice-type barriers with diagonal members must have openings less than 1.75 inches measured horizontally or 1.25 inches measured diagonally. Slats may be placed in openings to reduce size to the required dimension.
  - ✓ Decorative cutouts within a vertical member must not have openings greater than 1.75 inches.
- **Access Gates:**
  - ✓ Must meet height, opening and climbability requirements for barriers.
  - ✓ Must be self-closing and self-latching, and must open outward away from pool.
  - ✓ Latches less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate must be located on pool side at least 3 inches from the top of the gate. There shall be no openings ½ inch or greater within 18 inches of the latch.
  - ✓ Latches located greater than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate may be located on both sides.
  - ✓ For above-ground pools where the side of the pool is the barrier, the ladder shall be capable of being removed or secured to prevent access, or be surrounded by a barrier that meets the above requirements.



- **Door/Window alarms:**
  - Only applies where the house serves as part of the barrier:
    - ✓ Must sound immediately and continuously for 30 seconds
    - ✓ Must be heard throughout the house
    - ✓ Must reset automatically
    - ✓ Must be able to be temporarily, but not permanently, deactivated. Mechanism to deactivate must be 54 inches above the door threshold.
    - ✓ Must be UL 2017 compliant "Applies to operable windows that provide direct access to the pool, with a sill height of less than 48".
- **Spas and Hot Tubs:**
  - ✓ Safety covers may be substituted for barriers provided such covers meet standard ASTM F1346.
  - ✓ Hot tub safety covers will be inspected during the electrical inspection.

## What are the entrapment protection requirements?

Some pools may have circulation systems that may create hazardous entrapment situations for swimmers if not protected. These pools must comply with ANSI/APSP - 7 - 06.

NOTE: If you are not familiar or are uncomfortable with these requirements, please seek a professional's service.

### Call Miss Utility — Dial 811

Miss Utility is a free service that will locate all member utilities that may have facilities in your proposed area of excavation. Notification must be made a minimum of 48 hours prior to any excavating.



## What are the electrical requirements?

There are many specific electrical requirements for a pool based on the type and complexity of the installation. If you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with these requirements, you are strongly encouraged to seek the services of a licensed electrical contractor or contact the Department of Building Inspection for electrical requirements.

## What inspections are required?

The primary purpose of the pool inspection process is to assure that safety requirements have been met, including verifying that the electrical installation has been completed, inspected and approved, and that the swimming pool barrier requirements of the code have also been satisfied by a permanent pool barrier.

Swimming pools shall not be used until all required inspections of the pool, its barrier (fence or pool wall for an above-ground pool), and its associated electrical equipment have been approved.

The following inspections are typically required:

- Footing
- Barrier
- Final building
- Pool underground
- Pool potting
- Pool bonding
- Pool Rough-in
- Final electrical
- Rough-in gas
- Final gas

