

TOWN OF WISCASSET
PRIVATE SWIMMING POOLS
SUMMARY FOR GUIDANCE ONLY

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOLS

The following is a summary of some of the code requirements regarding the installation and use of swimming pools, both in ground and aboveground. These rules do not apply to pools that are less than 24" deep, or less than 250 square feet in surface area, unless those pools have permanent water recirculation facilities. (A round pool with a diameter greater than 17.8' is larger than 250 square feet.)

1. Location and permitting: Pools that are subject to these rules require a building permit, and must meet setbacks required by the zoning ordinance. The walls of an in ground pool must be at least 20' from septic system leach fields and 8' from septic tanks. Above ground pools and ancillary pool structures such as aprons, decks, etc. must be at least 15' from septic system leach fields, and 8' from septic tanks. Pools also may require electrical and plumbing permits, as applicable

2. Electrical: Pools subject to these rules cannot be located beneath or within 10' of overhead power lines. Pools cannot be located over or within 5' of buried power lines, other than wiring to serve required pool related electrical equipment. There are some exceptions to this.

In ground pools and aboveground pools with walls over 42" high: The outlet for the pool pump must be a grounded, single, twist lock, GFCI protected outlet located between 5 and 10' from the pool wall. The cord on the pool pump cannot be longer than 3'. An additional GFCI protected outlet must be provided between 10 and 20' from the pool wall for general use, located no more than 6'-6" above the ground or deck surface adjacent to the pool.

Aboveground pools with walls 42" or less in height: The pump outlet must be grounded, GFCI protected, and must be at least 10' from the wall of the pool. The pump assembly must be double insulated and grounded. The pump cord on these pools can be any length.

There are many specific electrical requirements for pools, especially for in ground ones. If you have any questions, check with an electrician.

3. Operational: All pools must have at least one means of egress while in use. Steps and ladders must have slip resistant treads and handrails on both sides unless there are 4 or fewer steps and/or the steps run the entire width of the pool. The pool and equipment must be equipped to be emptied completely of water and the discharged water shall be disposed of in an approved manner that will not create a nuisance to adjoining property.

4. Security:

Maine law (Title 22, sections 1631 & 1632) requires pools to be fenced, per the text below:

A fence shall be erected and maintained around every swimming pool, except that portable above-ground swimming pools with sidewalls of at least 24 inches in height

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are exempted. A dwelling house or accessory building may be used as part of this enclosure. All gates or doors opening through this enclosure shall be capable of being securely fastened at all times when not in actual use.

"Swimming pool" means an outdoor artificial receptacle or other container, whether in or above the ground, used or intended to be used to contain water for swimming or bathing and designed for a water depth of 24 inches or more.

"Fence" means a good quality fence or wall not less than 4 feet in height above ground surface and of a character to exclude children. The fence shall be so constructed as not to have openings, holes or gaps larger than 4 square inches, except for fences constructed of vertical posts or louvers, in which case, the openings shall not be greater than 4 inches in width with no horizontal members between the top and bottom plates. Doors and gates are excluded from the minimum dimension requirements.

Decks built adjacent to pools must meet the same code requirements as other decks (structural adequacy, guardrails on open sides, stair geometry, etc.).

In addition to the state fencing requirements, the Town of Wiscasset recommends that access to ALL pools be controlled per the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's pool barrier guidelines, a portion of which is attached. The entire document can be procured at the CPSC's website (www.cpsc.gov).

The Town of Wiscasset also recommends that even for pools that are exempt from the fencing requirements, that access to them be controlled, including removing any access ladders when the pool is not in use.

This handout is a general summary. Pools must meet a host of construction requirements contained in the building code as well as all plumbing and electrical code requirements. Pools can be dangerous and it's important they be installed and operated properly.